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LONE LIFE:

A YEAR IN THE WILDERNESS

BY

PARKER GILLMORE,

AUTHOR OF

"PRAIRIE AND FOREST," "GUN, ROD, AND SADDLE," "AFLOAT AND ASHORE,"
"ALL ROUND THE WORLD," "A HUNTER'S ADVENTURES IN THE
FAR WEST," "PRAIRIE FARMS AND PRAIRIE FOLKS,"
"ACCESSIBLE FIELD SPORTS," &c.

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LONE LIFE:

A YEAR IN THE WILDERNESS.

CHAPTER I.

IN the month of October, on a peculiarly English day, dull, raw, damp, and dirty, I set sail from Liverpool. There was just sufficient swell on the bar to send half the passengers to their bunks, and make brandy and soda in great request among the remainder.

When outside, the timid expressed themselves in strong terms against the utter disregard for life possessed by nautical men, in going to sea in such weather, the objects of their indignation looking rosy, energetic, and far from conscious that they were likely soon to become food for fishes.

The further we retreated from the shores of Old England the heavier became the seas, and the winds piped up in proportion; but in spite of a Tripoli being smashed on the coast of Ireland, a City of Boston foundering in mid ocean, and the Atlantic having knocked herself into a cocked-hat on Nova Scotia, nothing occurred to break the monotony of our voyage, unless a mania for draw-poker, and a lottery epidemic, both of which were most virulent and general, cold water being the sole application that appeared to act as a mitigator, for it was only while a blue sea was knocking about the furniture in the smoking-room, that any cessation in these maladies became noticeable.

Some inhabitants of London escaped the sting of the plague, neither was Egypt entirely depopulated by the same disease, so we had on board a few that were not affected by the prevailing disorders. These were generally young men who dreamt of collisions by night and thought of shipwrecks by day, who nearly went off their legs from horror when a weather-beaten salt was more forcible than polite in language, or listened with elongated pious face and upturned eyes to the latest and raciest of jokes.

But in spite of croakers and predictors of evil, Sandy Hook was sighted at sunrise; in a few hours

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afterwards New York was gained, and our Transatlantic passage was completed within eleven days.

A bath, change of clothes, and good dinner at Delmonico's took away my sea-legs, and caused me to feel as free from fatigue as if I had not been submitted to greater exertion than a stroll down Regent-street.

The metropolis of the Western World has been so often described that I will not inflict the reader with one word upon the subject further than say that it looked none the less busy than in former times, and that the numerous new buildings that had been erected were well worthy to grace any city in the universe.

My desire is to escape the bustle and din of traffic, to get where the puffing of locomotives, and the sonorous yell of the steam whistle has not penetrated—to be surrounded by the works of Nature, not those of man.

To accomplish this in the most rapid and agreeable manner, I take passage *via* the Hudson River Railroad to Lewiston by way of Albany, for to the North—the far-distant North, region of lakes and rivers, of boundless woods and barrens, of deep winter snows and nightless days—is my destination.

When the conveyance deposits me at the train, and the hurry and bustle of securing my ticket and check-

ing my baggage has passed, I feel that I have earned the right to take notice of the different sights that surround me, foremost among which is an immense board with the novel information indited upon it, "When you hear the bell look out for the locomotive." And scarcely had I commenced to puzzle my brain on this gratuitous hint, than a most discordant din caused me to look forth from my car, when I found out that it was a warning to clear the track and give place to the advance of the powerful steam horse.

For miles we thread streets bounded on both sides by populous dwellings, still not a rope or ditch separates the railway from other traffic, yet troops of children on either side play at the various games most in vogue among the rising generation of the Great Republic. Doting mothers here, I think, must have an anxious time. Still, I must confess, I did not see any excited females rushing about to look after their progeny. The truth of the matter is simply this: at the age English hopefuls would be in perambulators, or at any event under charge of a nursery-maid, these embryo western citizens are able to take care of themselves.

By degrees dwellings become less numerous and more irregular in style of architecture, and our pace increases to fifteen miles an hour, soon affording us a view of the glorious Hudson River, and of the

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rocky wood-clad heights that surround it. Of all seasons of the year this is the one to see this locality in perfection, for although never otherwise than beautiful, it is now indescribably lovely, recalling far more visions of dreamland than stern reality. As we advance every bend and turn disclose fresh attractions, till the brain becomes bewildered in its embarrassment of riches.

Six or seven hours under ordinary circumstances in a train, is certainly monotonous, but in this instance it is not so, for the mind has never been without food for thought, or the eye objects of admiration.

At length we halt opposite to Albany, city of canal-boats and machine shops, and the greater portion of our passengers hurry off to reach the ferry-boat that is waiting to convey them to its legislative shades, for know this is the capital of the State, and carpet-baggers, button-holers, and place-hunters haunt their friends in office, as mosquitoes would an intruder into a swamp.

At length newspaper boys, hackmen, and hotel touts are got rid of, the deep bass whistle grunts a warning, the bell again commences its measured tinkle, and the train is once more under motion.

Troy is the next place where a halt takes place; in size, go-aheadism, and wealth it outshines Albany. To carefully survey the people, and form an estimate of

them from their manner, you would find it difficult to decide whether they thought New York city should be proud of them, or they proud of New York city. No, the Trojans have no small estimate of themselves, and in their time have produced some well-known characters. Heenan, the prize-fighter, hailed from here, and its youth of the present generation take as much interest in the fraternity, as the clog-booted natives of Oldham would in a kicking match where one of the contestants was a stranger, and wore on his extremities pumps. To a native of the city of New York, Albany and Troy are "one-horse places," in their own opinion they are "a four-in-hand, and nothing less."

Again the tinkle tinkle of the bell tolls the hour for departure, and the train commences to move; still the bustle and confusion does not cease, for new arrivals are still seeking for seats, and friends bidding adieu are loth to part, but our speed continues to increase, the last moment for disembarkation has arrived, and in spite of the probabilities of broken legs and heads, all the non-travellers disembark safely, at least I did not hear of any casualties.

After leaving Troy, the Hudson is crossed, still a grand river, although a hundred and fifty miles from its mouth, and our course takes us through a lovely

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country, rivalling in scenery the sunny slopes and hazel-covered brows of Shropshire.

Then the Mohawk River is reached, and for miles we retain it in view. Its varied banks, dark pools, murmuring rapids, possess many attractions, and not the least among them being the thrifty, clean, neat farm-houses everywhere to be seen, smiling forth from luxuriant orchard or hardwood grove. But the iron horse does not linger, and fresh scenes present themselves, the surface of the country becoming more level, the cultivation more thorough, till a vast district is entered, which for extent and fruitfulness it would be difficult to find a rival. No one can doubt that such is the case who uses his sight, for handsome dwelling-houses, immense barns, well-stocked stack-yards, are never out of view, while droves of well-fed, aye, and well-bred cattle, feed on every pasture field and meadow.

A hundred years ago this was a wilderness. The primeval forest alone tenanted the land, and the beasts of the chase, with the exception of a few scattered tribes of Indians, were the sole animal life it supported. What better proof of the industry and energy of a great and free people can we desire, than such a wonderful transformation as has been here effected?

As daylight fades away, moonlight takes its place ; and such a moon ! none of your washy crescent-shaped nondescripts, but almost a rival in size and power to the sun.

Not that America possesses another or a better moon than we do, yet there are times in which she shows to greater advantage on the Western Continent than ever I have known her in England.

The change of light does not prevent a good view of the country being obtained, for when Cayuga and Geneva lakes are passed, the distant boats, and more distant villas, can easily be distinguished.

Travelling to me at night always appears more expeditious than by day. So when the crowd of baggage men and hotel touts crowd on board the cars before reaching the city of Rochester, I wonder how it is possible that the train has run so far.

But if for a moment I imagine some mistake has been made, that it is another town we are approaching, the deep dark abyss of the Genesee Falls, the towering flour mills, and the size of the station, set the matter at rest for ever.

Here I change carriages, Lewiston on Lake Ontario being my destination, for those I have come thus far in are bound for Buffalo.

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scald myself with a cup of coffee, the warning bell commences to tinkle, and disgusted with its monotonous tin-pot note, for I had not taken a liking to it from the commencement, I scramble into a seat, not without having to use considerable energy and force, for like myself many others had delayed to the last moment, and had no more idea of being left behind than your humble servant. All is said to be fair in love and war; I imagine that it is deemed so in trying to get into a train in America, after it has got under way.

After leaving Rochester the country is none the less rich than heretofore, wheat being the staple production, while fruit is cultivated to a great extent; in fact, the apples from this district cannot be surpassed, and are a large source of revenue to the farmer. The moon is still high in the heavens, so I can see for miles. The ridge in the distance is the commencement of elevated spurs, denominated the Bear Ridges, for at one time the bruin family were so numerous on them, that they constituted a large portion of the early settlers' food; but, alas! they have ceased to know what was once their home, and the only return the sportsman would find for his labour, who tramped over these wood-clad plateaus, would be abundance of woodcock, who, strange to say,

have only discovered this favourite feeding ground within a few years.

Lockport is next reached, well meriting the name for its locks are deserving of the greatest admiration' they being not only large, but admirably constructed. Their elevation and number I cannot say, still both are very great. Many years ago I resided near this thriving place of business; then it was only a village, and land was to be purchased within a few miles of its precincts for fifteen dollars an acre. After making the American coin into pounds sterling, I doubt if a square foot could now be bought between the canal and Lake Ontario.

On leaving the last-mentioned station, farm-yards, orchards, and woodlands are passed in pleasant succession, and ultimately the train slowly enters Lewiston, the termination of the first part of my journey, a pretty town situated upon the banks of the Niagara River, where it mingles its waters with blue Ontario. The dinner gong had sounded before I left my bedroom, for being constructed in pretty much the same mould as other mortals, I was sensible of the fatigue of yesterday's journey; however, the delay till next morning, when I should catch the steamer for Toronto, was of little moment, so I killed the enemy, time, by wandering about the fort and bastions that once had possessed no small amount of

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importance. Like all garrison towns, there is an aristocratic tone about, *id est*, if the military element is not overdone, but only sufficient of it to give the slightest spice to society—for like garlic in cooking, admirable when not abused, the reverse when overdone.

The life of the officers of the United States regular service stationed here, I should think much resembled what it used to be in Great Britain in the good old days of four company depôts, before rifle drill, scaling drill, depôt battalions, and ever so many more devices were invented by a lot of feather-bed, bad-tempered, stay-at-home, theoretical and not practical old fools, for the worry and annoyance of those whose value in the field in case of war was without price.

Before me, as I write, looking back into the log-book of memory, I can see a General who never saw a shot fired in his life except at a review, bullying to death an old subaltern, whose brow was tanned with years of service on the plains of India, whose stalwart figure bore many a scar, and whose heart beat under numerous medals—because why? he had made a mistake in his addition, and forgot the weight of a bayonet. As long as the door of the Horse Guards is open to sycophants and the relatives of politicians, whose influence has to be bought

over, such things will exist, and thus we lose year by year men, one of whom would be of more use to the country than a brigade of the others.

In due time the steam-boat for Toronto sailed. Ontario was on her good behaviour, and looked as blue and calm as the Bay of Naples in midsummer, when not a breath of air moves with sufficient force to swell the lateen-rigged crafts that sleep upon its placid bosom. A few hours and our destination is reached. Changed from when I last saw it, yes, changed indeed, for dwellings and structures have risen where formerly nothing but waste common could be seen.

The old hotel, its name now forgotten, had given place to a structure worthy of any capital, but the change is acceptable, for the promise of creature comfort is greater than in days gone by, and while within the pale of civilisation, there are few fonder of luxury than self.

The difference between cities of the United States and Canada is very conspicuous, although both adopt the same styles of architecture; from this reason it is difficult to describe—the nearest simile that strikes me at the moment being, the former represents the strong man under the flush of a stimulant, the latter the same person under the effects of a powerful opiate.

Citizens of the Dominion may feel indignant at

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what I have said; my answer is, that I do not see through the eyes of an untravelled fellow-citizen, but through those of a cosmopolitan.

Judging from the appearance of the principal streets at the fashionable hours of the afternoon, there was no scarcity of well-to-do, well-dressed, educated people; but if I am not mistaken society here is cut up into cliques, ever the bugbear of pleasant *réunions*, but where you have professionals and government *employés*, a largely represented mercantile community unless possessed of unbounded means and lavish in their hospitality, are certain to be looked down upon by that high class of society who serve their country for nominal salaries, which, however, I have never known them neglect to draw—possibly to give away in charity.

As I was going into a handsome shop I ran against a straight-haired, clean-shaved, smug, well-fed looking man, with a length of skirt to his coat almost rivalling an "Ulster;" he wore a white neck-tie, and I observed that the buttons on his outer garment were concentrated in a very close single file down the front. The fault was not mine, for I had my eyes straight to my front; he, on the other hand, was approaching the door, although his head was turned on one side to give a parting word of instruction to the shopman. Both being tolerably broad and stout we collided;

not that any injury was done, for the prominent portions of both were soft—very soft, I should say. Of course I raised my hat and murmured a word of apology, expecting a return of the courtesy. However, I was deceived in this nice-looking man—appearances, we all know, are deceptive—for with rather a knock-me-down air he gruffly exclaimed, “Can’t you look where you’re going, sir ?” If I were not a most peaceable person, I believe I should have answered him in his own coin or trod on his toes. Out of curiosity I asked from the shopman this polite gentleman’s name and profession. I fear he must have made a mistake, or thought I alluded to some one else, for he said, “That is”—well it is better to leave out the name—“a high dignitary of the Church.” We have had jovial Father Tom Maguire, of coursing celebrity, also many a parson who could ride across country or whip a salmon river with all competitors, aye, and preach on Sunday a good orthodox sermon beside, but I never met a teacher of humility with less of the quality in his eye or bearing than this Dominion example of lowness of heart and humbleness of spirit. In every fold it is said that a black sheep exists, and this was doubtless that one ; but why in earth, when the matter is so easy, don’t it get weeded out ?

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CHAPTER II.

THE Queen's Hotel, my temporary head-quarters, was clean and comfortable, without being extravagant. The landlord was a most pleasant, agreeable, well-educated person, while his sister, the house-keeper, was a pattern that any in her walk of life would have done well to take for an example. In Toronto I remained several days, for here I intended laying in my principal supplies, both for consumption and trade with such Indians I might be thrown in contact.

In selecting my stock I was materially assisted by a gentleman to whom I had brought a letter of introduction, for, having been long in the fur trade, he was thoroughly conversant with what were the requirements of life beyond civilisation.

However, I must not neglect one purchase I have made, namely, a terrier. I was turning the corner

of Young-street when a lad passed me with a dog for sale. I gave the animal a careful look over, and I was so pleased with it that I determined to become a buyer. For ten dollars it became mine, and when I afterwards, at the hotel, had a more careful and thorough examination of my new acquisition, I came to the conclusion that I had obtained a treasure. The lad, who had come thus far to deliver over safely my property and to give me a receipt for the money he received, in answer to my inquiry whether the terrier would kill rats, responded, "Yes, and wood-chucks too, and they are plaguey tough to handle." The last portion of his sentence he need not have added, for well I knew that it was but the gamest of dogs, especially of such diminutive size, that were able successfully to cope with this marmot.

"But the name," continued I.

"Only Skye, sir."

"He isn't one of Captain M.'s breed?" A race of the purest Skye terriers, imported originally by the old gentleman from his own estate in that island.

"'Deed he is; although father has owned the stock for some time now, he got the breed first from the captain's."

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got a prize, and when I looked at my new acquisition, there was not a single point that would denote him not to be of the pure strain. And well I knew them, for in the old captain's society many years gone by, I had seen one of this very race, in less than a quarter of an hour, although cut and slashed across the legs and chest, draw three foxes from the same earth.

At length I was ready for the start—my baggage I had packed up and forwarded to Orillia by the Ontario, Simcoe, and Huron Railroad, while I determined to do the first thirty-five miles of my road on foot, for many years ago I had tramped it, and wished again to have a look at scenes familiar to my sight in the days of my youth.

Of all long uninteresting roads, Young-street is possibly the most so, for from the time it leaves the shores of Lake Ontario, till it has advanced over twenty miles inland, it is without a turn, the houses edging it in the lower portion far from attractive, with a want of trees most noticeable. Seventeen miles from Toronto, Richmond Hill is gained—a prosperous little place and a great improvement upon the part of the road traversed; but it is a long and steep climb to reach it. However, its position is worthy of notice, for the ridge on the summit of

which it stands is a watershed, streams rising on either side of which flow in reverse directions, the northern brooks travelling thousands of miles before they reach the lake, that the southern ones gain in twenty. In explanation of this, a watercourse rising at Richmond Hill and flowing due south, would reach Lake Ontario before it had travelled more than eighteen miles, while a similar stream rising at neighbouring springs, from the dip of the land would have its current directed north; in the course of time it would enter Holland River, from there into Lake Simcoe, hence through the narrows into Lake Couchiching—then by the Severn into Georgian Bay, a portion of Lake Huron, the waters from which flow through Lake St. Clair, Lake Erie, and the Niagara River, before entering Ontario. Thus we see that the rise or depression of a foot of ground may sever thousands of miles streams which had their origin within a few yards of each other. Do not matters often as trivial sever lives for ever?

At a roadside tavern at Richmond Hill, I dined at a famous ordinary; the other guests were lusty, prosperous-looking representatives of their class, owing either to Scotland or Ireland their nativity.

It was soon apparent to me that I was regarded with inquisitive if not suspicious glances, and although

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several attempts were made during the meal to draw me into conversation, I courteously declined the honour.

After dinner toddy or punch was ordered, the different names being used according to the country that had given the thirsty soul birth. Canadians I knew were accredited with being able to take a fair quantity of ardent spirits, but these farmers could do more, and as their demands were gratified, politics were discussed with additional vehemence.

As I had plenty of time, I rested and enjoyed my pipe, yes, and toddy too, for I was much interested in the conversation. At length a shrewd-looking old Scot, looking keenly at me, and expressing himself in very measured terms, said: "Weel, sir, you look a man o' education and a traveller, will you no agree with me that Mr. Mac—— will make a better member than that ranting blethering chap Mr. O'——?" At the termination of this inquiry several voices were raised together to dilate on the claims of the candidate of whom the O.' faction was in favour. But the old Scot again got the floor, and with the same earnestness of manner repeated the question previously asked—adding in parenthesis to the others: "We ken what we think, but we'd a' like to ken what the stranger thinks." So silence was established and all

looked forward as if anxious to hear my sentiments. So I found it incumbent on me to say something—which I did in very nearly these words:

“Gentlemen, I know nothing about the matter, so must decline to express an opinion one way or the other.”

“Weel, there’s mair caution about you than folks would gie you credit for from your looks,” said the old Scot.

“Nor devil the bit do his looks belie him; it’s the pluck that’s wanting in him,” exclaims a regular broth of a boy.

“Well, you’re the last should find fault with him,” said a ferret-faced looking Lowlander, who kept his eyes on me though addressing the last speaker; “I’ll bet you glasses round he’s a Fenian.”

“And what if he is, more power to his elbow,” exclaimed a good-looking Irish lad who previously had not spoken.

“Likelier far that he be an informer,” shouted the first Patlander.

So the clamour rose to boiling point. Neither faction would have me accredited to them at any price; glasses were smashed upon the table, and sticks wheeled about, every indication of a free fight commenced, in which I knew I should be between

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two fires, both willing to immolate me to their passions; so I watched my chance, got an opportunity, slipped out through the door, paid my reckoning, and continued my tramp.

I had now got into a neighbourhood that once I knew well, so sauntered on slowly, picking out from the number of new erections that had sprung up, houses that had once been occupied by old acquaintances. I was possibly about an hour thus engaged when the sound of approaching wheels caused me to turn round. A thick, well-fed, cob-like horse, drawing a light market waggon, on the seat of which was perched the driver, muffled up in such numerous wraps and coats as to cause him to look as broad as long, and evidently affected with more stimulant than he could carry stiffly, was close at hand. When abreast of me the Jehu shouted, "Wo there, canna ye hear, lass, wo!" and the mare stopped, and I recognised my Scotch acquaintance of the tavern.

Steadying himself, he commenced: "Weel, sir, although it's me that says it, ye did uncu good service to you're ain sel', to get ahint the door, down at the public, for though I say it mysel' I'd ha gied ye as bonny a rap over the head wi' my staff, as ye most ever had in your time. I dinna ken now whither I'm doing right to the laws and country no to tak'

you up for a revolutionarising Fenian," but several hiccups prevented him adding more.

Answering, I inquired, "On whose authority he called me a Fenian?"

"On the authority of"—hiccup—hiccup—"of every one."

"Well, you may tell every one from me, that they are a pack of fools. Good-day, good-day, sir," and I hurried on.

But the old fellow would not be left behind, but continued to denounce me as a Fenian, and I really commenced to fear that if strangers coming along heard him, they might imagine that there was sufficient truth in his statement to cause me serious hindrance.

So stopping and turning towards my persecutor, with less energy and more softness of voice I informed him that I should sleep at the hotel at Bond Head Lake, where I should probably arrive in an hour, when I would satisfy his curiosity, and prove to his satisfaction that I was not a Fenian.

But this old fellow would not be put off; every second word he declared I had no intention of going to Bond Head Lake, and that if he didn't arrest me then and there, he would not be doing his duty to his country, for he was a loyal subject, and his father

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I was nearly climbing the fence and leaving the road, when I thought better to satisfy him, for in his present drunken state he might go and alarm the neighbourhood, and have them turn out in pursuit of me. So stepping close up to him, I said, "I'm no Fenian, I'm a Scotchman, like yourself; look at the post-marks on these letters, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Greenock, and read this one."

The old man looked astonished, certainly incredulous; laying the reins over the splash-board he said, "I maun find my specs before I believe a word of what you say." So he searched every pocket for his spectacles, ultimately finding them in the most unlikely one, then he slowly deciphered the post-marks, and ultimately read a few words of the letter, then closed it, the whole nature of his manner changing. Shoving out his hand with much energy, he had got half-way through the sentence, "Gie me your neuf," when he went out headforemost over the front wheel of the waggon. However, he was a hardy old fellow, and soon regained his limbs, when he shook my hand till he nearly dislocated my arm.

At length I got him up on his seat in the conveyance, no easy job I can assure you, and would

have been much more troublesome if the sensible old mare did not appear to have become used to her master's peculiarities.

"Now jest lowp in," said my new chum, when he felt himself comfortably seated. "We'll jest gang back to Richmond Hill, and we'll ca' at Sam McClaulin's, whar we'll hae a wee drappie, when we'll gang across to the tavern and gie them Irish the d—dest lambasting for insulting a gentleman like you by calling him a Fenian."

At length my new acquaintance departed, and I was sincerely congratulating myself on it, when he again stopped the mare and shouted at the top of his voice :

"Did na you say you were going to sleep at Bond Head Tavern? I'll gang on and tell them you're coming, and wait for you mysel', for we maun hae a drap thegither."

Where I was left to my own thoughts, was about three miles beyond Richmond Hill, the very vicinity that I wished to pay particular attention to, for close by stands a house in which I have received never-forgotten kindnesses, and for a Canadian dwelling has more of the English, or rather Scotch country gentleman's residence about it than any other I have here visited.

Walking quietly up the long approach, familiarly

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designated the avenue in old times, I made a detour so as to avoid being seen by the residents, for such a length of time had passed that it was very improbable any I knew now remained. In this I was successful, for the only sound that broke the solitude was the baying of a deep-voiced hound.

Turning down a path I had once known so well, and after passing a short distance through a margin of pines—remnants spared from the original forest—I stood upon the lovely little lake, in which I had fished day after day, capturing in goodly numbers the gamest of all fresh-water fish for their size, black bass. I felt I was an intruder, therefore did not like to peer too far, so satisfied myself by looking at what used to be the landing-place, to see if the neat gig, or a successor, lay there as of old. No boat was to be seen, and from that circumstance I felt great changes had taken place in this once happy and contented home, for in days gone by, the head of the house, with either sons or daughters for oarsmen, used regularly to have his hour or two fishing previous to sunset. Yes, and I have often pulled bow with a fair-haired, tall, handsome daughter of the Highland laird pulling stroke, and I can well remember how all my thought would get concentrated in the long and sunlit locks that, disengaged from their fastenings by the exertion, would sway to and fro under my gaze.

But it was getting rapidly towards night, so I stole away, figuring up remembrances of a wide flap hat and scarlet ribbon around it, with a sweet expressive face beneath, possessed of such soft winning eyes as might well have caused havoc with the heart of the chief of Ulva's Island, and make him prefer the chance of a watery grave to being deprived of his lovely stolen bride.

Brilliant red clouds hung over the dark pines that hid the setting sun, when I arrived at Bond Head Lake. The host had evidently been prepared for my coming, for his attention was greater than could possibly be expected to be subtended to a travel-stained, dusty, plainly-habited traveller, so I was shown to the best bedroom, a girl far too well dressed for servant ordered promptly to fetch me hot water, and otherwise attend on the gentleman's wants. When left to myself I took a look at the little lake across the road in front of the house. As I had last seen it, it lay calm and silent, with the heavy shadows of many a forest tree glancing on its bosom, while the reflection of the giant full hunter's moon upon its surface tipped the slightest ripple—even the plash made by some tame ducks—with molten silver.

On descending from my dormitory to the coffee-

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room, I met my friend of the waggon and mare; he was certainly more upright in his walk, and therefore I suppose more sober. Expecting my appearance he had brewed a whisky toddy, strong, hot, not too sweet, and just aware of the presence of lemon. I might have refused to take anything to drink if I had been asked the question previous to it being produced, but now that it was concocted and the brewer of it had exercised so much skill in its manufacture, I assented, and we hob-nobbed right merrily. My acquaintance was evidently well-known here, and from the lavish manner he threw about his silver, doubtless a very popular guest.

After my chop we adjourned to the smoking-room, where were two or three other guests, when the bottle circulated, and the old Scot soon became thick in his speech and dictatorial in his language. Again and again he told the story of Richmond Hill, only making this alteration, that Jock McFarlane, "whom ye all ken, and what's mair, think sa uncommon smart, but he's na that, and Tam Wilson would hae it that this braw Scotsman was a Fenian, and but for my ainsel' they might hae been the death o' him. And a wheen o' ranting Irishmen thought he was an informer, and but for me they would na hae used very kindly neither."

In his present fuddled state I have not the slightest doubt that he seriously believed he was speaking the veritable truth; but when he went on to say, that "he kent me from the vara first look, tho' he had na been muckle o' a traveller; but he was dom'd that any man who would tak' me for a Fenian must be a fule, and for a' ye like to believe that earl Jock McFarlane did, and ye a' think him a smart man."

"Well, not as smart as you are, uncle," said one of the strangers.

"Na, na, ye may say that," replied the old man.

"For I remember, now," continued the first speaker, "it's not more than two years since, come next Candlemas, that you sold Jock that bit of a pony for one hundred and ten dollars, that wasn't worth five-and-twenty. Yes, uncle, you're smarter than Jock McFarlane, altho' he's pretty hard to get the best of."

"You're jist right," responded the old man, then laughing out aloud, "that's a fac', jist two years sine. Weel a weel, I did get the best o' him, and I ne'er thought as muckle o' ony money e'er I airned," and turning to me with a broad smile on his face he continued, "It wad na be quite the thing to do amang strangers, but Jock and me are auld, auld friends, and we are baith in Canada."

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but never knew an instance to which it was more applicable than the present. Canadian horse jockeys get the reputation of being, as the Yankees say, "darn'd 'cute," and from the old man's idea, the customs of the land encouraged it.

As I retired to rest I heard this dry-throated old Gael singing for about the tenth time, "Geordie brewed a peck o' malt." I knew from what I had witnessed that he only commenced the stave when he thought it time to make a fresh brewing.

At breakfast I met him again; not a particle did he seem to suffer from his heavy potations of the previous evening—commencing the day with a hair of the dog that bit him, under the name of a wee drappy o' bitters.

Holland Landing was my destination, Newmarket my acquaintances, so he gave me a lift for some miles; but the parting came, and it was no easy one, for the hospitable old fellow had made up his mind to take me to his home, where the house and all that was in it was at my service as long as I chose to stay. The last I heard of him was, "Hoots, lassie, pit your best foot for'ard," and the mare rattled off at a twelve mile an hour gait down the rocky inclined road.

CHAPTER III.

THE scenery from Bond Head to the vicinity of Holland Landing is not only pretty, but excellent arable land. A few years ago any quantity of it could have been bought for a very small price, now it would take a large purse to buy a respectable-sized homestead. It used to be a grand place to shoot deer, but clearing up the woodlands has doubtless driven all that class of game off, if any were spared to go.

Soon I heave in sight of the long flat marsh that margins Holland River; for miles it stretches uninterruptedly on either side, and visions come back of the bags of wild duck and baskets of muscalonge I have taken upon its stagnant bosom. On reaching the wharf I find no steam-boat sails that day, so as I have plenty of time and a sandwich in my pocket, I turn off on one side to visit a grove where I have often encamped in days gone by when deer hunting.

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After a search I discover it, its appearance not improved by the occupants, a very dirty family of Indians, a remnant of the once powerful Chippewa tribe. They are truly a wretched-looking lot, reduced to this stage of misery by their unquenchable love of whisky and intercourse with the white man. Trying to discover a familiar face among them, which I did not succeed in, I turned my steps towards Bradford, and soon found the old-fashioned, for this country, comfortable inn, where I resolve to lay over for the night.

The railroad from Toronto on its way to Barrie and Orillia runs close to it, and as may be expected from such a circumstance, it has increased in importance, but has lost much of the tidy, Sunday air that formerly pervaded it.

There was, in the evening, a noisy party of sportsmen in the next room—the public one—who had just returned from Beaver Town, they having been deer-shooting up beyond Balsam Lake, so I got into a quiet seat amongst them.

This had once been a favourite hunting-place of my own, so I listened with no small amount of interest. They had been moderately fortunate, so the youngsters were in high glee; the more staid and elder ones agreeing that their two weeks' work was nothing

to what they would have done ten or twelve years ago. This is the old cry, and unfortunately a true one for those fond of field-sports; game is rapidly upon the decrease unless you go beyond the verge of civilisation.

This Balsam Lake has quite a romance attached to it; at least the voice of the people living at Beaver Town had given it one. It was a lovely spot, and deserved such an honour.

The story ran that between thirty and forty years ago, a well-known Admiral in our Navy became so enamoured of Balsam Lake, that he bought a large extent of land upon its margin, and there moved his household gods. As he was possessed of abundant means, no expense was spared in erecting a suitable dwelling. So workmen were collected from far and near, and a handsome stone house built, the interior fittings of which were said to be sumptuous. Then a host of lumbermen were brought, and rapidly rod after rod of the original forest was cleared away, till hundreds of acres were fit for cultivation.

Then came the story oft told—still oftener never known—of a young wife repining for home, friends, and civilisation, insanity in the end drowning her longings, and, too late, the bereaved husband quitting the wilderness in the futile hope of restoring intellect

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to the stricken one; death, unfortunately, was the only release her afflictions knew. So the broken-hearted sailor never returned; his arable grounds became an entangled thicket, and the house a ruin, for the place then was too far from settlements to induce any one to live upon it that depended upon the sale of their produce for obtaining the necessities of life.

Whether this tale is true, and the *dramatis personæ* were such as I have mentioned, I cannot vouch; but I have seen the tumble-down wrecked house, and shot deer in the second-growth timber that luxuriantly covered the soil where once had grown wheat. More than that, I have seen the grey wolf recklessly running down his quarry where, years ago, the skulking scoundrel dare not have shown himself without being saluted with a rifle-bullet.

American railways are not proverbial for velocity; Canadian ones deserve this character most thoroughly; but after many efforts on the part of the locomotive, in which the passenger could not help wondering whether they would be vouched success, we arrived at the village of Orillia—very much increased in size since I had last seen it, still none the less pretty.

Lake Couchachin, reaching almost to the residents' dwellings, rested in calm repose, its surface only being

broken by the dive of a wild-duck or loon, while opposite, listless-looking Rama was conspicuous, and the two islands half-way across loomed up, grand in their russet and scarlet covering of autumn foliage.

Many months I lived here, but so long is it since that I feel a stranger in the place that once knew me.

My baggage and dog I find safe; the little fellow seems to recognise me, an honour he has never done before; he is evidently one of those characters who do not make acquaintances in a hurry—good evidence of his sincerity when I have gained his confidence.

The hotel I put up at is one I have resided in before, but it has changed hands. I ask casually after a few of my old most intimate friends. Some have disappeared; others rest under the sombre shadows of the pine-trees that surround the graveyard. Sufficient then, I will remain unknown. After supper—a meal that takes place in America about the time my old brother-officers are assembling in the ante-room for mess—I go forth on a tour of inspection. “What to see in a Canadian country village?” I hear inquired. Well, to smoke a pipe, yes, and get the fresh air—I may as well confess further, to learn if the house stood where in years gone by one of the

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But all is changed; only the ground on which it stood remains. And wondering that man could be guilty of such desecration, I return to the tavern dissatisfied with the world, and in far from an amiable humour.

I have inferred that the climate of Canada is prone to make people thirsty, this was amply proved by the number of loungers who dropped in at night to have a night-cap. The quantity of these each visitor provided himself with, I should think would make a pillow on his bed superfluous, but among all the imbibers I did not recognise one familiar face, and a little over twenty years had done all this.

What was my own retrospect in that space of time? what had I seen? where had I been? Nearly all over the earth, and witnessed the struggles of nation against nation, the belching forth of shot and shell, carnage and death. And why should others not stray from home and friends as well as myself?

A more magnificent night it could not have possibly been than it was when I retired to my room. Feeling disinclined for rest, possibly to revive memories of the past, I threw up my window. Before me, jutting far out into the lake, lay the old familiar

point. And the moon which shone full and grand beyond it, wrapped its outline in that misty shadowiness ever so attractive. The panorama was grasped in a minute, and my thoughts wandered back to my boy love. All this is very romantic, doubtless, but nevertheless true.

Some have not the courage to make the confession that they have ever loved, more look at such boyish escapades as things to be forgotten. I'm not inclined to do either, although such a weakness may be deemed unbecoming in a wanderer; men whose mode of life should make them ever most indifferent to the tender passion. But the most improbable are its victims; even soldiers suffer periodically, and I have known them so severely scorched, that years afterwards they have borne the scars.

"But touching the lady, now you have told us that such a person once existed who made an impression on your susceptible boyish feelings, what was she like?" I imagine asked, and have no hesitation to gratify such natural curiosity.

She looked better bred than human beings are usually moulded; on foot or horseback, in promenade or ball-room, she could not have passed the least susceptible of the sons of man, the least inclined to exertion among the lords of creation, without their

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turning to have a second glance, nay, a long fixed look at her handsome, graceful figure.

“And how did you meet her, and all that sort of thing?”

Well, in this way. I was staying at this village; for several days during my afternoon walk I met an erect, handsome, military-looking old gentleman. The cut of his clothes was certainly rather of an antiquated date, and exhibited indications that they had endured a fearful amount of brushing, but being ever scrupulously clean, failed to impress you with shabbiness.

With the courtesy of one of the old *régime*, the second time we were thrown in contact he bowed, the third time we met occasion was made to start a conversation.

My old friend, Captain —, had travelled a very great deal, seen much of life, was a keen observer, and a delightful conversationalist, and when he knew that I was the son of a military man, and one that had served with him in the Peninsula under the great Duke, we became so intimate that he invited me to visit him.

A perfect childlike simplicity and a superabundance of the gentlest feelings in human nature were his characteristics; still he had done everything, from

having his man out, to making his regiment throw away their knapsacks, to enable them to charge better, when he had the honour of leading his corps in one of the most brilliant affairs that took place between the American troops and ourselves, when we advanced on Washington previous to its capture. For which little escapade, viz., discarding the men's necessaries, laughingly he used to tell how he was tried by court-martial, acquitted, but informed not to do it again. Half-pay was all the means he possessed, but even on that moiety was considered by his primitive neighbours "passing rich," as was the curate in Goldsmith's *Deserted Village* on a much smaller stipend.

At length I paid my promised visit. I was fortunate, for I met the old gentleman engaged, spade in hand, among his flowers, to which he was remarkably attached and unremitting in his attention.

Ushering me into his sitting-room, from the abruptness of our entrance we surprised his daughter sitting in the recess of a window that looked out over the lake, busily engaged in mending her father's socks. Many young ladies would be ashamed if detected by a stranger engaged in such occupation. But she had not a particle of false pride in her veins, but rose with all the grace of a duchess, and met me with that unaffectedness and sincerity of manner

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From that day forth my regard for the old captain grew apace, while for the daughter admiration changed into love, which kept increasing with the lapse of time as would vegetation in a perpetual spring, and really how could it be otherwise, for Miss —— was not only graceful, as I have said, but she was lovely. Her complexion was simply brilliant, but there was a transparency about it that whispered to me thoughts of consumption. She was even more beautiful than *distingué*, her face a perfect oval, her nose aquiline, with thin chiselled nostrils, her forehead which was smooth, broad, but not high, was shaded on either side with a wealth of chestnut-black wavy hair, generally worn simply caught up and fastened in a knot on the back of her classic-formed head. For a heroine of romance, a Lucy of Lammormoor, the world might have been searched over without finding as suitable a prototype. Still she did not impress you with sadness, quite the reverse, and her energy and industry never permitted her to be idle a moment.

The better to enjoy my partiality for field sports, I moved across the lake to the termination of a deep bay, distant about six miles from Orillia; but what did space matter, love made my arms strong and my

heart brave, for in all weathers, calm or storm, I would find myself at the old captain's once, sometimes twice a week. When I look back upon the black tempestuous nights that I have beat home, in my narrow long gig, with the sail reefed down to its smallest size, and ballast lumbering the floor to the very seats to make the craft able to bear up against the blasts, it appears to me perfectly marvellous how I ever escape going to the bottom.

Autumn drifted into winter, and about the middle of December the ice came, the frost steadily increasing for nigh a week, but so far not a flake of snow had fallen; so every afternoon saw my skates buckled on, and away I flew for Orillia, and the society of—well, I'll say the old captain's daughter.

I think it was Christmas Eve, if not, within a day or two of it; the old gentleman, who had lately been indisposed, retired early, and I remained; our *tête-à-tête* was delightful, and time sped so rapidly that midnight came before, yes, long before it was wanted.

Getting up, I prepared to go, sat down again, and postponed leave-taking a little longer. At length it was one o'clock, so buckling on my skates in the sitting-room, and well muffled up to keep out the keen frost, I went to the door accompanied by my companion, and found to our surprise that the ground and lake

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were covered with snow, and that large, heavy, but not numerous flakes were still descending. My hostess implored of me not to think of starting under such circumstances; "there was a spare bed for me, papa will be so angry when he knows it," were all urged in vain, for young fools are often fond of making heroes of themselves, and even sometimes hope that a reckless assumption of indifference to danger will cause them to obtain the reputation of courage.

A long plank, the landing-place for boats when the water was open, jutted out into the lake. So anxious was Miss —— to prevent my going, that in spite of snow and thin shoes she followed me to it, for from there I intended starting on my cheerless journey.

"Good-bye, it's all right, there's no danger," were my parting reassurances, and I struck out into the darkness and the storm. As scarcely an inch of snow lay upon the ice, I got on famously at first, and soon drew near the two islands, the narrow channel between which I intended to pass through. Although only a short space of time had passed since I started, a complete change had come over the appearance of the weather, for the wind had commenced to rise and sough dismally, and the snow to fall in blinding quantities. I might have turned back, but a monitor within whispered shame upon such cowardice, so I

braced myself and determined to carry out my original intention. My speed was now necessarily slower, so between the two islands I entered, feeling less plucky and a good deal more uncertain as to the issue. I had nearly cleared them to strike out for the open water when to my left a lucifée howled in his most dismal unearthly manner. This animal's voice was not familiar to me then, and it terrified me to such an extent that but for the greatest mental and physical exertion I should have broken down through fear, for I believed such a weird-like note could only come from a supernatural being. After overcoming the first shock, my strength returned, and fear gave me an additional impetus to renew my speed; but I had not gone far when the same wild cry echoed from my right. Alloway Kirk and a thousand other ghost scenes flitted before me, and I fairly flew to escape the locality that Satanic beings had evidently selected for their revelry.

But the storm had increased, the wind lifted the loose snow and heaved it about in wild fantastic drifts, and the big descending flakes rushed before the impetuous blast. Fifty yards I could not see before me, yes, often not half that distance, but onwards, onwards I struggled, hoping my course was right, praying that I should not by chance be directing my steps to the haunted islands. I skated and

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skated, slackened my pace from pure exhaustion, renewed my efforts with desperate will, again to slacken them for want of power of endurance. Hours must have passed thus, and I was becoming reconciled, careless of results, when something dark loomed before me; scarcely had I observed this when I fell forward. Gathering myself together I hesitated whether to rise or not, when the same looming dark outline presented itself. With a great effort I found I could move; slowly I dragged myself on towards what I knew not; more I cannot tell from memory, for the next twenty-four hours are a day of my life for which I have got credit, but was deprived of the power to use.

In a comfortable room I found myself; it was in the residence of the Methodist missionary, living at the Indian village of Rama. How I had come there was in this way. The good old clergyman could not sleep from the howling of the tempest without, so the night had passed till about four in the morning, when he was alarmed by hearing some heavy substance fall against his door. Ever on the alert to do good, and believing that it might be one of his flock who required aid, he rushed down-stairs to ascertain, and there found the writer insensible, and many a week passed before he was able to find his way back to Orillia.

Not long after came the news that every proba-

bility existed that England should 'go to war with Russia. Day and night I could not rest, "for I longed to follow to the field some warlike chief," so I quitted the calm shores of Lake Couchachin, and continued travelling eastward till I reached the land of my birth, little then believing, still hoping, that I should again see the "Lady of the Lake."

I have now been at Orillia for several days, but intend leaving to-morrow: during that time I have visited several of my old haunts, and had a few hours pike fishing. My companion is the first person whom I have recognised, although time has made a wonderful change in his appearance. He is a Chipewa Indian, who was frequently a hunting companion in days gone by, and at that period considered the best trapper of his village. But drink, that curse of the Red-man, has made him prematurely aged, and his formerly steady hand that could handle the rifle with such precision, now shakes like an aspen leaf. I asked him on the first day we met about his sister Margaret, who, when I formerly resided here, was the belle of all the Red-skin beauties, a veritable Pocahontas. Old Joe promised that I should see her on the morrow. I almost wish I had not now—for I would have much preferred to live in the memory of her charms than to renew her acquaintance if she has suffered cruel and forbidding alterations.

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Of all races in the world that I know of, the women of none change so rapidly as the Indians, and an old squaw is actually hideous.

But Margaret came across to see me—doubtless visions of some loose change floating before her eyes had caused her to be so prompt in her attention, I thought, when she entered the room. For my part I never would have recognised her; but after a long and careful survey, in which she carefully examined my hand for an old scar, she quietly sat down upon a chair, all the time keeping her eyes fixed upon me. After a lengthened pause, pointing with her witch-like claw, she said, "Yes, that is the white boy—the same that live long, long ago, at Sugar Maple Point." Money, to my surprise, she refused to accept; but a resplendent Brummagem trinket she carried away, appearing to be made the happiest woman in the world by the gift. Next morning her brother brought me a beautiful mink skin, skilfully tanned and dressed, and worth ten such baubles as I had given her as a present. I was ashamed to accept so handsome a gift; but all that I could say would not argue him into receiving remuneration for it. So, in this instance, I had judged my old acquaintance wrongly.

CHAPTER IV.

WHILE paddling along the upper shore of the lake about two miles beyond Sugar Maple Point, where I had previously resided, I turned the canoe's head inshore, to point out to Joe the scene of an episode that nearly cost me my life. The place, however, was much changed; for when I saw it last it was only a neglected clearing, here and there brush asserting a position. Now it was overrun with a dense growth of maple and birch, laced and locked together with creepers of every kind indigenous to the country. Doubtless a favourite cover with game, but the very deuce for a white man to be obliged to force his way through.

The story was this. On a lovely autumnal afternoon—and none who have not seen them can imagine the beauty of such localities in all the gorgeousness of scarlet, pink, gold, and green with which the

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vegetable world is here clothed, and its magnificence as well as harmony when a bright sun lights up the landscape in the fall of the year — I and an Indian lad, little over twelve years of age, left my residence to try a pair of hounds that had lately been presented me. After coasting about three quarters of a mile, a wood-chuck being observed upon a stump, we both landed from the birch-bark with the hope of being able to unearth the marmot and make him a prize. The only weapon we had with us was an axe, and although with its assistance we rapidly enlarged the burrow, still on further investigation we found it was so deep that our efforts were certain to result in failure, if limiting ourselves to daylight, so it was determined to give the task up. While resting before re-embarking, both of us heard the half grunt, half bleat of a buck; immediately the lad ran off for the hounds who were in the canoe, and with them we struck into the bush in the direction from whence proceeded the deer's challenge note. The sharp eyes of the Indian were not long in discovering a fresh trail. Uncoupling the dogs, they did not require being laid on, but stooped at once to the trail and went off at racing pace, alarming the sleeping echoes by the deep cadence of their mellow voices. Cheerier notes I never listened to,

for their producers were of a race now nearly extinct, whose deep chests and heavy flews produced a music that would drown the voice of a whole pack of ordinary fox-hounds. Hoping that the buck would take the water after half a dozen rounds of his favourite haunts, generally the last and most successful *ruse* to throw out persistent pursuers, we entered the canoe and paddled from shore a few hundred yards. But the decrease in the distinctness of the voices of the hounds proclaimed that the hunt was leaving our vicinity, so we coasted for over a mile in the required direction. This step received its reward, for we were evidently again abreast of the dogs, who seemed to be at fault ; for although their voices were none the less sonorous, still the notes were not repeated as frequently. "There the deer, there," called my companion, and following the direction indicated by his hand, a head and gallant pair of antlers could be seen stealing smoothly, and without an effort, over the surface of the unruffled lake. Not awaiting, as we should have done, for the game to get well away from land, we immediately gave chase, and as few animals swim faster than deer, the wary creature turned for shore the moment it observed us, and we had the satisfaction, if such it can be called, of getting within a few yards of its nut-brown flanks as its feet grounded, a few rapid plunges carrying it on shore, when it

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disappeared into the jungle. The hounds, who had been attracted to the beach by our shouts and cheers, as each encourage the other to renewed, and, if possible, more powerful exertion in propelling the canoe, almost mobbed the buck, but being an old stager he managed to avoid their onslaught.

Again we paddled out a few hundred yards from shore, the better to command a view of the coast line, for we still had an absurd idea that the quarry, after his first experience, might be induced again to take water. Youth and inexperience are the only excuses that can be urged for such ignorance in venerie. The monotony of our position began to get irksome, when I perceived an object nearly half a mile off, that looked like a piece of charred timber floating on the water. Close observation disclosed to me that it moved, and advancing in its direction over half the intermediate space revealed a wake, and the species of animal that made it.

"Oh for a gun!" I exclaimed; "what would I not give for a gun!"

"You steer," said the boy; "I kill him with the axe."

"No, I will; you steer; I have twice the strength that you have, and you can handle the canoe better than me," I hurriedly said to the lad.

So I got the axe and placed it handy beside me, and knitting my teeth, dipped the paddle deep, and we drove our light craft skimming over the lake.

I did not much like my task. I would have given anything to have changed my weapon for a gun; but show the white feather before that little grinning fiend behind me, who would not have halted for even thought, supposing the danger had been twice as great—no! never! But a few yards divided us now. I carefully laid my paddle on one side; my hands were hot and trembling from the unusual exertion, so I reached both for an instant into the cool water and took the axe, having got my legs under me so as to be able to get on my feet in an instant. Bruin did not like us; his lip curled, and his eye looked back towards us, but he did not deviate in his course.

“Are you ready, boy?”

“Am,” grunted the young savage.

“Then give way,” I said; and he did, for the canoe shot forward as a sleigh over the smoothest ice-track.

One, two, three. I am within striking distance. Slowly I raise myself; the heavy blade describes a circle over my right shoulder, and comes down with a swing that would have felled a bull, a crunch as of the pulverising of bones telling that my exertion has not been fruitless; but the power with which I struck

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threw the canoe off her balance ; so to save an upset I dropped the axe overboard—yes, overboard. I had not time to do otherwise, for but a moment postponed our immersion : but it was only for a moment, for the bear, when it received the stroke, turned over and placed one of its paws upon the gunwale. We were unarmed, and therefore unable to cut his hold adrift, and in a moment our cockle-shell was floating bottom upmost, with the paddles, bear, and ourselves bobbing up and down around it like the cork floats of a net full of large fish. Fortunately, Bruin was satisfied with the mischief he had done, or felt too weak to attempt further hostilities, so made for shore, leaving us to hang to our craft, the most obstreperous of all its race when it gets an opportunity of this kind to make itself disagreeable. However, after some exertion we got it righted, and the lad got inside while I held on by the stern, the young Indian soon after paddling into shoal water. Next day the bear was found in the last agonies preceding death, and prime as both pelt and carcase were, I doubt if I should like to go through the same escape to obtain their superior, let alone their equal.

Joe, who listened attentively to all I said, only indicating his presence by a grunt of approval, exclaimed as soon as I had finished :

"That all true; that just so. I know who was with you that day; he often tell me all about it; he old Snake's son. You remember old chief Snake—live in next big house to missionaries' in Rama?"

No, I could not remember my companion's name, and I told him so.

"Well, that no matter. Old Snake son, I tell you. Old Snake still alive," then turning very serious in features and solemn in voice, "but Jim dead—dead now long time; he all the same as brother to me, and best hunter we then have. Yes, he all the same as brother to me."

"How did he die, Joe?"

"Oh, ordinary way; nothing funny in him's death." (He doubtless meant peculiar.) "Him coming home from fall hunt one stormy night; wind blow very hard; so top of pine-tree snap right off and fall on him. Suppose you come to Rama, I show you him's squaw and sons."

I should have taken Joe with me on my intended journey if he had been as formerly, but his love of whisky had shattered his constitution, and prematurely he had become an old man. He begged hard to go, but I told him firmly but not unkindly it could not be. With tears almost in his eyes, he kissed my hand at parting, exclaiming to himself, "That whisky kill

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I feel convinced—well, I would not take away the poor fellow's character without cause—that I saw him enter a grog-shop as the train rolled out of the station, in which he doubtlessly got roaring drunk in ten minutes, and did not leave till all his hard-earned money was spent. Alas, the poor Indian! he is like a child—more helpless in fact—for he cannot control his longings if in his power to gratify them.

At Collingwood I found, as I had been informed I should, several families of Indians belonging to the North, far up beyond Muskoka Lake, ready to depart for their hunting-grounds. They had been down here to trade, and supply themselves with necessaries for carrying on the winter hunt.

With few exceptions they were the poorest, most miserable-looking lot that I had ever previously seen, and it was quite evident that they had indulged in a heavy drinking bout, as long as the means to supply the needful lasted. I was quite discouraged and very nearly changing my destination for Minnesota, when a circumstance arose to induce me to adhere to my original plan.

Many of the storekeepers with whom the Indians had dealt, I asked for information regarding them,

whether they knew them, where they came from, and more important still, whether they thought they were to be trusted. To all of these queries I got most unsatisfactory answers, for their conduct since they had come to the town had been one scene of drunkenness; moreover, that they were all strangers, and had never been there before. The keeper of one store I had visited several times had a remarkably kindly expression, with a soft laughing eye, and was less severe upon the unfortunate Red-skins than any of his neighbours. In his shop I had on two occasions seen a sun-burnt, short hairy man, either lolling about or sitting upon a flour-barrel. His manner was evidently that of a person out at elbows, and very anxious to get something to do. I saw that he eyed me closely, and believe he wished me to enter into conversation with him, which I did not, preferring the advances to come from him. At length one morning I entered the store, and while speaking to the host, the stranger came in, respectfully listened to our conversation, and at its finish told me that he was both a trapper and lumberman, had followed either one or other, or both if circumstances permitted, and would be happy to join me if we could arrange terms. As a further inducement he told me he knew the locality I wished to go to, but that if I would deviate more to the left he could take me to most admirable

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I listened quietly to all he had to say, and then asked him if he had a character, or could he mention any one that could vouch for his good behaviour.

No, he had not; he might have had doubtless if he had ever thought such was necessary, but he had lived beyond settlements where he could always get his living independent of any one, unless he went lumbering, when the boss of a gang had only to see how he could handle an axe for five minutes, or drive a yoke of cattle, and he was bound sure to give him best wages.

I knew that what he stated was more than probably true, so I told him to think over what arrangements we could make for the winter, possibly for a year, and let me know on the morrow.

In the mean time I made numerous inquiries about this man, but no person knew him; all that they could say was, that he had come from the West in the steam-boat, a week or two since, had paid his score where he lodged, and had conducted himself in such a manner as not to have become objectionable to any one.

His first demand on the morrow was fifty dollars a month, a winter fit-out, and permission to trade on his own account.

After such a proposal I told him that it was unnecessary to broach the subject any more, so he left.

In a few hours he returned, and said he would be satisfied with half the amount of money; but even with this deduction I refused to engage him.

Again he departed, the nonchalance of his manner being diplomatic to perfection.

But next morning he was announced again. He didn't come to talk business, only to learn how I was getting on; was willing to give me any information I wanted, took a glass of grog and a cigar, of course, at my request, and regretted extremely that we were not at the other end of Lake Superior, for he could take me from there into the best hunting-ground in the world, bar none. The impudent assurance of this man was his greatest attraction. In the Indian country of the far West I have met many of his stamp, but he beat them all. If coolness and decision would rescue any man from the just penalty of his rascality, then this one was sure to escape.

After imbibing his glass of whisky, he spoke much more freely, and less guardedly than before—for one glass of spirits has double the effect upon persons who spend the greater portions of their lives where it is not to be obtained—and I learned as I supposed that he had traversed the plains and seen Mexico, spent a winter in the Rocky Mountains, and had

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lived hail-fellow-well-met for indefinite periods with the Sioux, some distance north of Fort Edminton. He was really very amusing now, and his society did not bore me in the least, so I listened with pleasure to yarn after yarn, which I believed true, because there was a probability about them, and a knowledge of the persons and places who figured in them, that it was impossible for an uneducated man to conceive.

Still I made no allusion to his accompanying me.

At length, when a spirit of *bon camaraderie* appeared to be thoroughly established, he again broached the all-important subject, by saying:

"Captain, I'm darned if I would not like to go with you; name your own terms, and, if reasonable, I'll go with you."

I had expected this turn to take place, so was not at fault but determined to make him an offer, believing, as an additional inducement, that his yarns would help to kill time very pleasantly of a long, lone winter night.

"I'll give you a first-class winter outfit, provide you with food the same as my own, find you in ammunition, traps, &c. You can keep the pelt of all the game you kill, you can trade on your own account as long as you treat the Indians fairly, and I will supply you with articles to do so to the amount

of thirty dollars store price; and if you behave fairly with me, I'll give you every assistance to get your goods out when I break up camp; in return for this I am to be boss (head of the party), you are to cut up the firewood, and do a fair share of work either in canoe paddling, camp keeping, shanty building, and packing home game. But if you should break your contract, or I should desire to be rid of your society on account of bad behaviour, before three months are up, then you shall only retain your winter kit, and obtain from me such provisions and ammunition as will suffice to bring you back to civilisation, retaining also the furs you have trapped in the interim."

This, after some demur, was agreed to, so I had a fac-simile drawn out, attested by witnesses, and to which he attached the sign of a cross, for he could not write. Antoine Fortier, however, was his name.

I having settled thus much, despatched him among the Indians, who left in a day or two, to learn particulars of their destination, and whether, if we joined them, for a liberal remuneration, they would pack my goods as far as our routes continued together.

Alone I should have hesitated to trust myself among these miserable people, now that I had a white companion I felt that such a course, although possibly still possessing risk, the chances were very much lessened.

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Among the Indians I had noticed a bright, pleasant-faced, half-starved, almost entirely unclothed boy, about fourteen years of age. His miserable state I could not help regretting, so I gave him a few coppers when chance threw him in my way. Among his people he appeared to be without friends, and, consequently, the drudge of all.

One bitter bleak morning I met him at the tavern door; he appeared to cower under the cold blast, and so forlorn and destitute did he look, that compassion for his situation took strong possession of me. So I asked the little one into the kitchen and gave the lad a regular blow out, very much to the disgust of the low dirty Irish Biddy who operated as cook, and whom, thank goodness, I had not seen before, or my appetite would have been much lessened. Talk of English schoolboys eating, the most voracious of them would not have been a patch upon my *protégé*. And mind, his food was none of your cakes, buns, blanc-manges, and that kind of finikin stuff, but regular solid, hard substantial grub. In very truth, I stood and wondered where on earth such a skillagaree could stow it all; however, I did not hurry him, but waited patiently till he said enough, and nearly choked over the effort.

Well, I took quite a liking to that boy, not on account of the powers of digestion he had exhibited, but

—and who would not that felt as they ought to do ?—on account of his desolate wretched condition, and that at an age when everything should be the reverse, so that in the trials of after life he might be able to look back to a bright period in his existence.

After a debate in my mind, selfish, no doubt, for I balanced the advantages and disadvantages of having such an attachment to my retinue, the wind played an additional hornpipe round the window-sill of my bedroom, and the fireless apartment looked more cheerless, and I shivered; that shiver recalled the memory of the poor boy out-doors, and the milk of human kindness rapidly increased within me, and I resolved to ask the little fellow to go with me, to share alike with me, but possibly, yes, possibly, have to go on short commons; but under any circumstances to be kindly treated and suitably clothed.

So, in the afternoon I broached the circumstance to him, when his face lit up with joy.

“Go, would he go with me?”

“Yes, anywhere.”

“Whose permission should I ask?”

“No one care for me—got no friend.”

Still I considered it right to ask the members of the camp where he slept. All responded :

“Him was no use. Father dead, mother dead, him die next winter, nobody care about him.”

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So I took him there and then, found a place in the barn for him to sleep, a large buffalo robe to wrap around him, and next morning provided him with cheap certainly, but warm clothing.

"And no one could see why I should take the slightest interest in the ugly little brat." These were almost the verbatim words that several professing Christians said to me.

As master and employer I did not consider that it behoved me to mention the matter to Antoine; soon, however, he found it out, and was very wroth. After a few common-place remarks on the subject, to which I responded little, he angrily commenced:

"Why hamper ourselves with a dirty, unwashed, filthy, good-for-nothing, Red-skin spawn like that?"

"Because I wish it."

"But you are a fool to be imposed upon; the whole expedition will be spoilt."

Searching among my letters I found the agreement; holding it up, I said:

"I suppose you wish to break this contract, if so, it is easily torn up and thrown in the fire."

"No, no, I don't mean that," he exclaimed.

"Well, then, if you intend keeping it, know once and for all that I am boss, and will not be dictated to by you or any one else. I have letters to write and would be alone."

Smirking and smiling he retired, protesting all the time that I misunderstood him. Well, it may be better that I did, for from that date it put an end to any doubts who was commanding officer.

In the morning Antoine visited me; he was all good nature, and adhered to his former statement, that I misunderstood him, that what he had said was dictated by regard for my interest, afterwards informing me that he had made arrangements with the Indians to take my baggage to what he considered a splendid hunting-ground, and at a price which appeared to me very reasonable.

Then the morrow was fixed for the start.

Taking my *protégé* and Skye with me, for the latter now condescended to regard me as master, we took our way to the former's late camp. Its inhabitants were about to start north-west in a couple of days. With envy they seemed to regard their late *attaché*, on account, doubtless, of his new clothes, which certainly neither fitted nor became him; but when we bid them good-bye, not a word of regret was expressed at his departure.

Poor lad! terrible would have been his fate among them if they had run short of provisions, too young and without means of providing food for himself, they would have driven him forth in the wilderness to die of starvation.

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CHAPTER V.

THE first four days of our journey was performed on foot. Besides the small packs Antoine, the boy, and myself carried, we had about two and a half hundredweight divided among the Indians, made up in loads of about fifty pounds each. These I took no more supervision of than to see that they left in the morning and were delivered up at night. The weather was cool and bracing, and with the exception of the first two days, when the walking was wet and very boggy under foot, the ground was firm and free from other impediments than fallen timber, and where the forest was not dense, occasional clumps of brush. As far as my judgment went, I should say that a good seventy miles laid between us and Collingwood. So far I had done no hunting, for the very reason that I determined, until all were got into thorough working order, pleasure should be sacrificed to busi-

ness, and any attempt on my part to set a different example would have been demoralising in the extreme, and likely to result in the subversion of discipline.

I have forgotten to add that, before quitting civilisation, almost at the last house upon its outskirts, I purchased from a squatter, farmer, or whatever you choose to call him, another dog, a thorough cur in shape, if my judgment be not erroneous. I was tempted to become the owner from the lowness of price asked and the good looks of the intelligent putative mother, who was unquestionably a veritable *bonâ fide* colley. The sire I could learn nothing of—doubtless some stray Indian cur.

Never having had a previous knowledge of such a cross, I hoped that the animal would turn out a perfect treasure. If his excellence ever equals the difficulty there was in catching him, and retaining when caught, never was better value received for a five dollar bill. For safe custody he was intrusted to the care of my Indian lad, who was much delighted with the responsibility of so valuable a charge.

The first two days I noticed that they had occasional differences of opinion; latterly dislike seems to have retired in favour of friendship, and if such a

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happy state of affairs continues a day or two longer, Poteen, for so I have named him on account of the whisky-loving physiognomy of his late owner, will be released from leading strings and permitted to pick his own way. Skye evinces an inveterate dislike to him, so do the three or four curs belonging to the Indians; doubtless before long his interest will tell him who should be propitiated, for there are two distinct cliques among the canines, the Scotch element and the Indian, and although the former is very much in the minority numerically, if ever actual hostilities break out, I would lay my money upon the Gael.

Anxiety for the first night or two after getting under way, operated upon me much in the same manner as upon the sailor getting clear of land, so my sleep was far from sound or refreshing; not so now, for I have scarcely finished my doch-an-darras pipe when I am in the arms of Morpheus, little Skye cuddling up, head and tail fashion, on my warmest side, and so watchful is he that not a soul can approach my dormitory without his giving alarm.

Antoine he is not partial to—a bowing acquaintance he certainly has with him, but nothing more. The Indians he refuses to acknowledge at any price; even as to his food, he expects to receive it from me; ordi-

nary well-picked bones, such as generally fall to a dog's lot, from other hands he would not deign to touch, unless Poteen or one of the Indian curs cast a longing eye upon it, then ideas of providing for the morrow seem to strike him, when gingerly picking up the despised morsel, on three legs, with extra turn in his tail he will trot off pompously into the bush and secrete it. Bless you, he's far too aristocratic to be selfish; possibly, who knows, but that he thinks that the scraps he treats thus, by the half-starved *canaille* that happen for the present time to be his fellow-travellers would be unappreciated.

The fifth night we encamped upon a beautiful dry knoll covered with beech, maple, and birch, just such a rise of ground as in some future day will be selected for the site of a farm-house, from whence the country for miles around can be overlooked. As far as I can form an opinion without breaking the soil, the great difficulty the agriculturalist will have to contend with at first, on settling in this neighbourhood, will be the quantity of stone scattered over the surface. The soil itself appears remarkably good, and especially suitable for the cultivation of potatoes, hops, beans, barley, or oats; but I fear it is too northern a climate for wheat to become a staple crop.

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naded us to-night; there must have been half a dozen in the troupe. Their feelings were certainly suffering from some grievous wrong, if the volume and mournfulness of their notes are to be taken as an index. Of course, the Indian dogs could not resist the inducement of chiming in the chorus; even Skye followed suit, a clear case of a prince fiddling among professionals; however, I overlooked the matter and did not censure him, as it is the first time that my dog has forgotten to be a gentleman.

Turning out soon after daybreak, although the water was icy cold I could not resist the temptation of taking a bath; however, a couple of minutes under a shower of spray sufficed, the reaction making my skin the colour of a boiled lobster; but after I got thoroughly dried and dressed, I felt I had energy to undertake any mortal thing. An old Indian, while I underwent my ablutions, sat upon a bank wrapped in silent wonder; when finished, he rose silently, uttered a single word and walked away; that word, when translated, meant lunatic. A woman that once professed to love me very much, used frequently to call me the same; from her mouth I considered it a term of endearment. It is this metamorphosing the use of words in our language that causes its difficulty of comprehension to foreigners.

Our route to-day is north-east, so I determine to leave the trail and proceed north for two or three hours, then work eastward by north. When all were started on the line of march I struck off into the forest, half a dozen ball, and a couple of dozen shot cartridges in my pockets, and Skye at my heels. The little iron-grey beauty evidently had been in the society of a gun before, for he hunted the cover around me with all the energy and industry of a spaniel. Soon I found a family of ruffed grouse, out of which I killed a brace, so frequently afterwards repeating the performance that I soon had as many as I felt disposed to carry. Deer tracks were extremely numerous, but I had not seen their producers; this might have been caused by my devoting myself entirely to the pursuit of the smaller game, or their being frightened by the occasional sharp bark of my dog. However I was not destined long to be denied the honour, for under a beech-tree, evidently picking up mast, I perceived a doe. Substituting ball for shot, I tried to stalk her, but Skye became excited and would not keep to heel, so lost me the shot. A little longer acquaintance with my new companion, and I feel certain, from his intelligent countenance, that he will see the necessity of prompt and thorough attention to my wishes.

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Two hours, possibly a little more, I had travelled so far east by north, that I soon looked forward to striking the trail of my party. When crossing a fallen tree, around which a tangle of briars had grown, a fawn of the past spring jumped up almost under my feet and bounded off. It was a nice clear easy shot, and when about thirty-five yards off I tumbled it literally in its own track.

Taking the heart and liver, I pursued my way, breaking every fifty yards a branch from a tree, or limb from bush, to mark my course; in half an hour afterwards I struck the trail, where, leaving a bough, I hurried after the baggage party. About half-past three I overtook them preparing to camp for the night on the margin of one of the most charming little lakes I ever remember to have seen.

Its bosom was as calm as glass, not a ripple to be seen unless when a loon or fish broke water. On its placid surface reposed three picturesque rocky islands covered densely with coniferous and deciduous trees, birch preponderating among the latter, their feathery aerial limbs in many situations drooping down till they almost kissed the water.

A couple of months ago, when the foliage was in all the gorgeous colouring of autumn, this sequestered spot must have looked like fairyland, for even under

present circumstances, with all the larger hardwood trees denuded of foliage, and a cold leaden sky overhead, it looked enchanting.

An old squaw and one of the younger Indians were sent back for the fawn ; they returned about half-past six, looking very much knocked up by their additional exertion. In our camp there was feasting that night, and it was very late, I think past midnight, before the *gourmets* ceased from banqueting.

Day broke wet and miserable ; the shirker of exposure would have refused to turn out, and there was an obvious intention manifested to adopt a similar course, but I pretended not to see it, and by bustling about soon shamed into activity the indolently disposed.

The season was already so late that it was absolutely necessary to push on, for although I expected to be overtaken by winter before reaching our destination, still the nearer we got to it before that took place the better ; moreover, this was our last march on foot, for our next camping ground was on the margin of a river where the canoes of our party are secreted.

There are few things more disagreeable than a march through woodland, where not only the ground is saturated with moisture, but every limb supports

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globules of water; to brush against them you cannot avoid, and the moisture appears to penetrate further when thus come in contact with, than the rain itself. Our tramp was such a spiritless affair from these depressing influences that it very much resembled a funeral procession, and scarcely a word was spoken till the sun burst forth about mid-day, his influence on the energy of all being truly remarkable.

Poteen has been permitted to run at large; he evinces a great disposition to hunt, but objects slightly to the report of a gun; some game killed in his presence will doubtless soon get him over this very worst of faults.

Of all curs, and I have an intense dislike to the race, I never saw such a despicable lot as accompany our Indians, one in particular, a scanty, irregular-clothed, sharp-nosed, prick-eared, diminutive, starved brute. Inquiring from his owner why he kept such a miserable wretch, only fit to be shot, he answered "that he was the best bear, porcupine, and bird dog that they had." After this conversation half an hour had scarcely passed, when there was a sound to our right of a worry going on; immediately a stampede was made to see the cause, your humble servant leading the race. We were not long kept in doubt, for there was the dog whose character I had so ruthlessly

attempted to take away, pitching into a porcupine much heavier than himself. The victim somehow or other the cur had turned upon its back, rendering its armour of spines useless, at the same time exposing the vulnerable stomach and chest, on which the assailant's tusks were busily engaged. After the battle was finished the plucky little vixen had not a wound. I'll bet no English dog would have come off scathless from such a contest.

My *protégé*, I must not forget to say, has changed very much in appearance. The first and most noticeable indication of improvement in health, is his skin, which has become moist and bright, instead of dry and scaly as formerly. There is nothing in the Indian races of North America that more surely denotes their state of health than their hide. The lad also has much improved in spirits, and his formerly expressionless eye has become bright and observant. Although he carries a pack I have taken good care that he should not be overloaded, and so little does he now regard it, that he and Poteen are ever to be found about the van of the column.

For a mile before we had reached the anticipated river the coniferous trees rapidly commenced to give place to hardwoods, which gradually became less and less abundant till we stood upon its banks. A noble

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stream truly it is, made up of rapids, pools, and reaches, with its course frequently divided by miniature islands.

The respective loads being deposited on the site that we were to camp, while the majority were employed erecting a shelter, collecting firewood, or cooking, four of the men departed to look for their canoes, which were hid in a swamp some distance off.

Next morning, about two hours after sunrise they returned, each paddling a birch-bark sufficiently large to carry six persons with comfort. As exposure to the atmosphere had made all of them leak more or less, the remainder of the day was spent caulking, refitting new ribs, or sewing up rents. The ingenuity of the workmen and skill with which they perform their task being truly wonderful.

Having taken a rough observation of the course of the river, I struck off into the bush. Deer tracks wherever the soil was sufficiently soft to show the impression of the animals' hoofs, were most abundant. Before I had walked above two or three miles I saw several, but they were evidently shy, either from having heard the voices or chopping of my people, or smelt the smoke from the camp-fires. At length, however, I came across half a dozen together; two

were standing, the others lying down. One of the former, a well-fed, large and restless-looking doe, appeared to be guard to the party, and as some minutes elapsed before I was within range, her uneasiness alarmed all and caused them to gain their feet.

It could not be the wind that had warned them, for it was blowing from them to me, but some limb I had trod on, the sound of which breaking unnoticed by myself, had been detected by their sensitive hearing.

The watchful doe, who was apparently in the prime condition, was the first I took sight at. At the report she sprung into the air, staggered forward about twenty paces and fell; the second barrel fired at the rearmost of the now retreating family party was less successful, for the quarry went off, hit I believe; for few are inclined to acknowledge even to themselves that they have made a really bad shot.

Another morning of rain; too bad, as I desired very much to be afforded an opportunity of admiring the grand scenery which I feel convinced guards this river on either side, for it is impossible that such a lovely picture as rapids, pools, reaches, and islands, could be without a fitting setting. However, I must not grumble, things might be worse, moreover rain must fall, however objectionable it may occasionally

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be, particularly to those that are without shelter; fine dry weather is certainly delightful, but an uninterrupted succession of it would soon play mischief with the vegetable world, and what then would become of the animal kingdom?

One might as well expect the year to glide away without bad weather, as to pass through life without a rub of adversity—they both do good you may rely upon it, and the easiest way to feel their stings less poignant is to think so.

An advantage that canoe travelling possesses over walking, is that you can muffle yourself up so as to escape a great deal of the drift, and you are not constantly saluted with boughs loaded with moisture, that appear to imagine their express duty to be to re-christen you, and this they do with no niggardly hand.

But as before, at noon the sun exhibited his jolly roseate face, the fog momentarily after became thinner, and that that would not be absorbed politely floated off, doubtless with the hope of escaping destruction, a hope not to be realised.

Talk of laughing waters, here they were in perfection; and so infectious became their example that both canoes and passengers followed the example as we glided, bounded, staggered, and again rushed onwards.

It was a wild reckless race: the canoes, although handicapped with a freight, still striving whether they could beat the rapids in their velocity past rocks, driftwood, and trees. The Indians looked happy, the dogs pleased, and I felt an exuberance of spirit, a freedom from restraint, a recklessness of danger that was truly delightful.

At three hours by sun we had gone a long way, and the river, which now had become exhausted, and therefore sluggish from its former exertions, increased much in breadth. Our paddles appearing to be handled with scarcely the former energy, I thought of calling a halt, when a turn of a tree-clad point of land revealed the broad expanded surface of a lake, a sea almost in size; and scarcely had I made this discovery ere our prows were turned to shore, the cargoes were rapidly transferred to the beach, and every one of the party became engaged in endeavouring to unravel some most intricate knot his limbs had got twisted into while sitting in the bottom of the canoe.

Towards evening I took a stroll. Ruffed grouse appeared everywhere. So abundant were they, that if I was not aware that they did not migrate, I should have thought they had assembled for that purpose. Yes, this country is well stocked with game, and that

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fellow knows it, and has profited by his knowledge—a bald-headed eagle—or he would not be sitting there so indolently with his cruel, relentless, vindictive eyes fixed on me, although not more than a hundred yards sever us. I had a great mind to put a bullet in a barrel and tumble him from his perch—you see two of a trade seldom agree—but didn't. I suppose the knowledge that he was first in possession of this demesne, and thus had a prior claim, prevented me.

A bleak cold camp, and a sleepless night, did not make me feel either good-tempered or anxious for exertion; but the Indians are up and doing, a heavy, dark, drop-curtain of a cloud rising in the north stimulating them to renewed vigour to reduce the distance between themselves and home. If I am any judge of the weather—which I am not—it will snow before long.

Striking across a wide bay, we soon caught a nice stiff breeze, such as amateur sailors—such gentlemen, I mean, as the expression is rather ambiguous, who wear blue reefing-jackets and white flannel trousers, canvas shoes and loud-patterned shirts, straw hats with blue ribbon, on which are emblazoned feminine names in gold letters, who prefer belts to braces, although half their time is occupied in tugging their

nether apparel up to prevent it from falling down—yes, just such a breeze as they would designate a gale when they got on shore and joined the society of cousins Lou and Florence, or chat with those charming *distingué* girls (*sotto voce* let me say their father was once a mute, but has lately amassed a fortune as an undertaker). The young ladies simper and look incredulous, for there has scarcely been a breath of wind on shore; however, they are reminded that the most severe gales are local; the late experience of the gallant amateurs is undoubtedly an instance of it, and from that moment Jones and Smith are heroes.

I am afraid there is a tinge of satire in what I have just said; if there is not, I intend it, for between ourselves—it need not go any further you know—for a whole week I had been paying most devoted attention to such a nice girl, told her all my best stories, discussed typhoons, cyclones, and hurricanes, adventures among niggers, Malay pirates, and South Sea Islanders—in fact, taken her all over the world, in imagination of course, and introduced her to every rock, nook, or cranny that I had ever visited, and would you believe it—I am certain you will not unless I back it up with strong language—by jingo! she cut me for such an amateur sailor as I have so

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feebly attempted to describe, and by Jove, I had almost forgotten to add, the fellow wore an eye-glass!

With dirty blankets hoisted on paddles to do the duty of sails, we skimmed over the water right merrily, and by night had made double the distance we anticipated, and during the whole day not a flake of snow fell. It would pay a fellow to keep me, if it was a matter of consequence for him to know beforehand how the weather was going to be, for he would be certain to be right if he backed the reverse to what I predicted.

From our present camp we have a portage of three miles; the canoes of course have to be carried across, so a day will be lost in the performance.

I went over with the first load after breakfast, and having backed across a pack of fifty pounds weight, considered myself entitled to the remainder of the day, so I started down the stream on which we embark on the morrow. Not more than half a mile had I proceeded when I surprised a doe moose swimming across from my side to the other. As she had not seen me and I was close, I found time to alter my shot for ball. With the first barrel I hit her very hard, so hard that she floundered heavily; but still I think had sufficient go left to get off, so I put in the second at the moment she gained her footing before reaching the shore. On

receiving the ball the poor thing roached her back so high that she appeared unable to get her feet to the ground ; a few steps she moved forward, then fell upon her head against the bank. Having now enough fresh meat and to spare, I sauntered back to camp, and spent the afternoon gun cleaning, washing clothes, and darning socks. Although thus employed I could not help observing the immense quantities of wild-fowl following up the course of the river ; as their flight was high they were doubtlessly migrating south.

Antoine I see very little of, my appearance or manner evidently have not favourably impressed him, so we seldom exchange above half a dozen words at a time ; still that does not prevent my noticing that he looks sulky and far from amicable in frame of mind. At the same time I will do him the credit to say, he never shirks his work, or gives me any occasion to find fault.

This evening he informed me that to-morrow we shall be at our winter quarters, a most gratifying piece of intelligence, so all night I kept conjuring up what kind of place the site of our future home was to be.

Next evening at sunset my curiosity was satisfied, and I may add gratified. It was a comparatively

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open piece of turf-covered land, sparsely covered with trees that, from the river making a bend, formed a promontory. The throat of a rapid enclosed by high rocks was above the situation I selected for the shanty, beneath was a long placid pool, fringed in places by alder and birch.

CHAPTER VI.

IN the morning, after vainly attempting to persuade the Indians to remain a day or two longer, so that I might have their services in house building, they departed. I feel certain that the poor fellows were willing enough; but the head man, pointing to the ducks that were still flying from the north in undiminished quantities, said :

“Winter soon come now, and Indian got long way to go.”

After paying them they thanked me, and were evidently amply satisfied. But when they were about to go, I added a few trifling presents to what they had already received, and their gratitude was strongly expressed in looks, although in few words. I sat upon the bank and saw the last of them; as they were disappearing round the first bend in the stream, I gave them a cheer; long after the trees had shut them

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out of sight I heard them answering. So much for the much abused race.

I felt low-spirited when I turned towards my future home. To give way to it was simply absurd, and to get rid of it there was nothing like work, so I got hold of my axe and set to cutting up and clearing away brush with a thorough goodwill.

In the mean time Antoine was constructing near at hand a very snug bush camp in case snow commenced to fall, or severe weather impeded our work. Over a respite in our labours, the size and plan of our shanty was settled, viz., twelve feet by eight, with a door at one end and a look-out hole at the other, to be kept closed except in fine weather, or when required for purposes of observation. A fireplace was not required, for we had got a stove made from sheet iron, that shut up like a pigeon trap, and several sheets of tin with solder and rosin with which to make piping. That afternoon and the next two days were employed cutting and notching logs, or rolling them with handspikes to our future building site.

Antoine I found a most skilful fellow in the use of an axe, and a perfect genius in all matters calculated to make a person feel at home in the woods in the shortest imaginable space of time.

I had been watching his deftness, while taking a

puff at my pipe, for I had been rather severely tried in rolling, as I considered, an unnecessary large log up an incline into its place, when both dogs sprung to their legs, and barking vociferously, rushed down by the bank of the river. Looking in the direction I saw an Indian approaching. Calling off Skye and Poteen the stranger came directly to us. He was a tall, well-built, very good-looking for his race, old man.

In answer to my salutation he gave a grunt, then stood leaning upon his gun for quite an hour in one position, without opening his lips, I in the mean time going about my business as if no one was there. Feeling a desire for another pipe, I pulled out my pouch, loaded up, lit it from an ember, and commenced to blow a cloud. The Indian's countenance lit up. I held the pouch towards him, he took it, filled his pipe, and sat down beside me.

At length he got up, said: "I go home, you good man, Indian say so," and turned on his heel and marched off. Give a dog a bad name, and you may hang him, give him a good one and you may let him live; so I looked now forward to not being cut off in the bloom of—I was going to say youth, but will substitute manhood.

"Well, how did that tarnation Red-skin know we were here?" inquired Antoine, after he had departed.

"Blest if I know," I responded.

For some time my companion scratched his head and afterwards bit his nails, both actions being calculated to assist thought. In a few minutes after, having received benefit from the proceeding, he favoured me with the result.

"I guess the Indians that packed our load across, told him."

This solution of the difficulty was the only one I could think of.

In the morning before we had finished breakfast the old chief, for so I have learned he is, turned up again, and with him two young men, each about three or four-and-twenty. When we commenced work they turned to also, and soon our structure grew rapidly under the efforts of our increased force. Little now was wanting but the roof—this they understood, and that evening we had birch bark enough to make it.

Next morning I told the old chief, who had now become a little more loquacious, that I wanted a canoe, pointing to Antoine and the boy as the number of inmates it was to carry. In the evening he left us, and the following night he arrived with exactly what I required. His companions now were two girls; judging from appearance the elder was about eighteen, the other two years younger. Their home was evi-

dently down the river, for that was the direction from whence they had come.

Two days after our roof was finished heavy snow commenced to fall, preventing all description of outdoor labour; but there was an abundance of work for all to do inside. The Indians, whom I paid liberally, for I wished to propitiate them, left; and we were again alone in our solitude.

Although some time has passed we are not yet finished in our labour, new holes are constantly being discovered in the walls that require fresh chinking, and articles of luxury, such as chairs and tables, to be rebuilt, from legs being irregular lengths, or not sufficiently firmly put together. Still the little place has assumed a home-like look, and the dogs snarl and growl at each other as if each was jealous of the comfort the other enjoyed.

Antoine has done good work and not spared himself, moreover he has become more agreeable, and does not hesitate when the humour is on him to tell of his adventures in the Rocky Mountains, of his performances in shooting buffalo and grizzlies. He had concluded a long yarn one night, and finished off by regretting that I had never visited that region. Waiting for him to quite finish, I told him I knew all about it, and had spent a long time there.

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His eyes opened and continued doing so, till an observer might have imagined they objected to a bridge between them, and there and then intended to do away with it.

The Indian lad was most willing and obliging; rapidly his figure increased in size, but the way his paunch grew was something wonderful. It is certainly a useful portion of a man's body, but that is no reason it should be allowed to take liberties.

Altogether we were most comfortable, and had every reason to be grateful to Providence for having subtended to us such a succession of good luck.

Having succeeded now in making the interior weather-tight, and constructed the few articles of furniture necessary, also got the routine of our daily life into a regular groove, I consider that I am fairly entitled to take my leisure and enjoy the field sports and pleasures of a life for which I have come so far.

Already I have got a pretty good idea of the plan of the country within a mile of the shanty, and have learned that the river for upwards of ten miles runs from the south nearly due north, not making allowance for bends and elbows, so if I have the misfortune at any time to get lost on the east side of the stream, by travelling west by compass I am pretty certain to find it, and *vice versâ*.

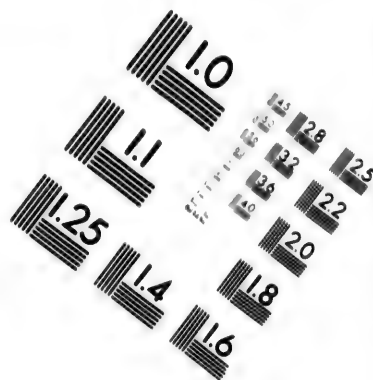
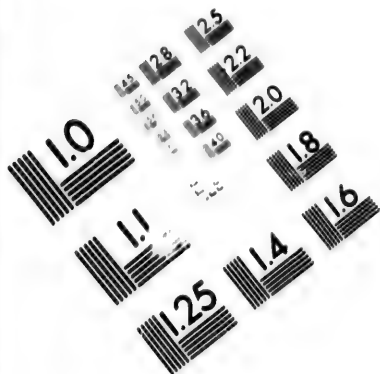
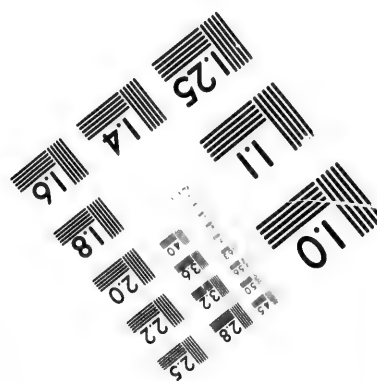
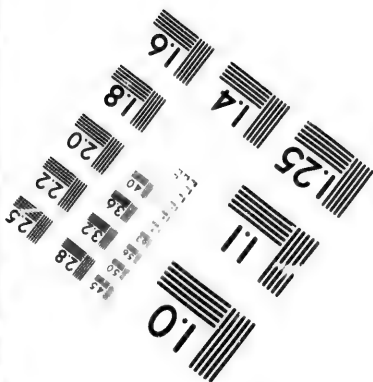
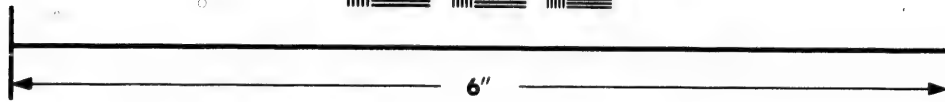
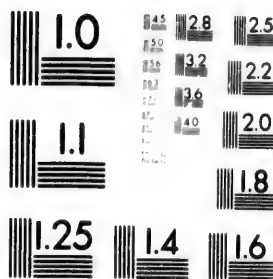


IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (MT-3)



Photographic Sciences Corporation

**23 WEST MAIN STREET
WEBSTER, N.Y. 14580
(716) 872-4503**



I am more than an ordinarily good hand in the woods, still I am not an Indian, and previous experience has taught me that it is better not to be too reliant on my power of finding my way, especially through dense swamp and heavily clad ridges of pine, where everything you see around you appears a perfect counterpart of what you may have passed hours before ; so at least for the present I am resolved not to go far from home without having the reliable company of my compass.

I have discovered already that, however good an axe-man Antoine is, that he is but indifferently fond of hunting, for now we are at our destination, in the middle of our preserve, he neither expresses any desire to commence the campaign against the moose and cariboo, but has even ceased to expatiate on his former exploits in their pursuit. He does not even care about accompanying me, always having the excuse that his traps must be looked to, for that trapping "make almighty more dollars than burning powder." In this there is a certain amount of truth, at the same time hunting must be done to enable us to live to carry on trapping, and it is clearly evident that my attendant expects me to supply him with food while he collects a good pack of furs for the next season's market.

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Although this is quite contrary to our arrangement, still I suppose it is better to submit to the imposition. As I never expected to make money out of my trip, or even make it pay the light expenses which at most it can only incur, still, if I have a wish in the matter, and I have further the idea that such wish deserves humouring, I would rather for some time to come hunt in society than alone. Of course the Indian boy could be taken, and a clever, smart, obliging lad he is, but some person is required at the shanty when both the Frenchman and self are absent, for our evening meal has got to be prepared, and who knows some visitors might arrive when least expected, who finding no one to protect my property, consider themselves justified in appropriating to their own use what struck their fancy. I have known such things occur before, and experiences of the kind are those dearly learned lessons which ought not to be forgotten.

My Indian neighbours I am not much afraid of; they have not mixed enough with traders, or frequented the vicinity of settlements enough to have become sufficiently contaminated to be thieves, and if they did so far forget themselves, they reside so close to me that I should sooner or later discover their peccadillo, and either through the aid of a high

hand, or through the assistance of the chief, who really appears an aristocratic old fellow, be able to obtain redress.

No, it is the white trapper, trader, lumberman, or voyageur, that is to be dreaded, for very many, I won't say all that adopt these lives, are the sweepings of society. And although I hope to see none of these worthies, still there is no telling what may cause them to leave their ordinary route, and by chance pass my residence, when they would not fail to land and gratify their curiosity with a "look at the outlandish home, that some half-cracked squatter or blarsted Johnny Bull had chosen."

Well, "sufficient is the evil for the day thereof," and I have no idea, certainly no hope, to be honoured by a visit till after winter has passed by any one of my own colour.

The weather one morning being admirable for creeping, *id est*, stalking cariboo, for the snow is soft and the timber wet, I started soon after break of day to see how much luck was in store for me. On my way through the large timber I saw a great many spruce grouse, which I desisted from shooting at from a desire not to alarm the neighbourhood, and so get a fair opportunity to note what stock of large game the locality supported. I also came across the track of a very large moose, who, judging from his stride, must

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have been on urgent private affairs, so I left him to his duty, only hoping that we should yet meet.

I had gone nearly three miles before I came across cariboo tracks, the first I observed being rather stale, so I disregarded them, getting by degrees into more sparsely timbered land where more and fresher indications were numerous. Pushing due east for some minutes I came out on a barren, very park-like in scenery, and well scored over with prints, so much so that it was like what might have been expected in a densely populated deer park; however, I could see no game. Knowing from past experience, if you once disturb cariboo, they go right off out of the neighbourhood, not stopping till they have placed miles between themselves and the object of their dread, I returned into the friendly shelter of the timber and determined to retain it till I saw my quarry. The reindeer is a large animal, still it is most difficult to see when in a state of repose, so much so that the uninitiated would scarcely believe that possibly the place on which his eyes were fixed, not a hundred and fifty yards off, and not superabundantly stocked with brush, sheltered four or five of these noble animals. Such was almost my case, for I had most carefully inspected a little copse of dwarf hemlock and hazel from the back of a log, and had all but come to the conclusion that it was tenantless, when a deer rose like something that

had been shoved up through the earth, exactly where I had gazed several minutes and perceived nothing.

The trails around had made me cautious, they were so fresh and numerous, yet up to this moment I had sighted nothing, and almost commenced to think that the producers of them had been gifted with the power of turning invisible; but such fancies were now dispelled.

Being desirous of making certain of my quarry, I changed my situation and advanced under shelter of the side of a large decayed prostrate tree, to within seventy yards. I had an admirable broad-side shot; the stricken beast staggered, spun round, and lurched forward on its head, four others, in the mean time, jumping up and making off, all of them nearer to me than the creature I had shot; still I had not previously noticed them, in fact their sudden appearance on the scene startled me so much, for it was so thoroughly unexpected, apparently impossible, that they had gone too far before I thought of giving one of them the second barrel.

In an hour more I obtained another shot most unexpectedly. A cariboo I had not previously seen, jumped up within twenty yards of me, and I broke his hip before he had gone double that distance, and a smashed hind leg, not like a fore one, puts a certain stopper on further progression. While examining this

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beauty, which had much more white about it than the species usually possess, I observed four cariboes out upon the barren, and apparently admirably situated for a stalk, but having killed enough meat I desisted.

I returned to the shanty perfectly satisfied with the results of my exploration, and feel certain that if assisted by two or three companions who would keep the game moving, half a dozen might easily be killed by one gun between morning and night from a well-selected stand.

On arriving at home I despatched the Indian boy to the camp of my red neighbours to request that they would give me assistance to drag the game out of the woods. Although the distance was quite ten miles, and the ground covered with soft damp snow, the lad performed his errand and was back in eight hours, for which amount of expedition he got a good wiggling, I never for a moment wishing or supposing that he would think of returning the same night. Moreover, I had my fears for a child of his age travelling over such a long solitary reach, for wolves nightly were heard around the shanty, and the species found here, the large grey wolf, is not always to be trusted when winter has placed her stamp on the landscape.

Next morning the old chief, his squaw, two daughters, and a young hunter arrived; for a portion

of the meat and a plug of tobacco they agreed to pack both the carcasses home. Their hunters, they said, "had very bad hunt this season, their powder so very bad." This I could quite believe, for the trash the traders often foist off on these primitive people is truly disgraceful.

For instance, I have known twenty-five pounds of gunpowder transformed into fifty by the addition to it of an equal quantity of charred wood; the result is that the Indian must, literally speaking, almost be touching his game before he is certain of bringing it to bag. The poor old chief remarked to me so feelingly, that I could not help commiserating him, that "My people be very hungry before this winter over, I guess." Not if I can help it, I mentally resolved.

As no snow had fallen my back track told them the way. Two trips they made that day, and in them backed home the two cariboos, therefore the party can scarcely have walked less than twenty-five miles, and the greater part of the journey bearing a heavy load, over ground slippery and wet, in every way unsuited for travelling. I think that there are few Englishmen could do the same; yet these people are slight in their build, impressing one more with an appearance of agility than strength.

It was quite evident to me that evening, as we sat

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over our after-supper pipe, that Antoine was smitten with the charms of the youngest daughter, a stout, compact, good-natured, little round-faced girl of about sixteen ; for much of his conversation was addressed to her, and his eyes, when his tongue was silent, seemed to regard her as the centre of attraction. The old squaw did not apparently object, but rather the reverse, possibly being pleased with the idea of possessing a white son-in-law. Thus it will be seen that match-making mothers are not confined to Belgravia, Brixton, and Dalston, but are to be found in the wigwams of the redoubted Red-man. When it was time to turn in, courtesy did not induce me to give up my bunk, so the chief and his family fell asleep on the green cariboo hides, their blankets with some of mine forming their covering, the remainder of the party finding a sleeping place on the other end of the floor. So many human beings packed in so small a dormitory, I felt convinced was not conducive to health ; in fact, I thought that, if it long continued, we would become like a bait kettle overstocked with minnows ; but, under the circumstances, what could I do but submit, for it was out of the question to send them forth into the snow-clad woods after their exertions of the previous day.

CHAPTER VII.

IN the morning after all had partaken of an ample breakfast, I discharged in full my liabilities, adding a pound of good gunpowder for the old man, a very seedy wide-awake for the old lady, a string of beads for each of the girls, and half a dozen fish-hooks for each of the others. All departed happy, and promised soon to renew their visit.

I wish very much to keep on good terms with these primitive people. Such a desire is not dictated solely from a want of selfishness, for they may be to me of the greatest use; so if treating them fairly, and never swerving one iota from my promises, will make them friends, I have resolved that they shall be.

Antoine, who has been tolerably successful with his traps heretofore, has lately had a run of bad luck. This he accounts for by a wolverine, or glutton, having discovered them, which follows him; devours

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all the baits, and springs his traps. The last part of the story I scarcely believe, although I have heard this animal accredited with such malpractices before.

Thus he is perfectly disheartened at this *contre-temps*, and actually proposes changing our residence, a thing I will not for a moment listen to. Almost snivelling, certainly in such whining accents as nearly approach it, he says :

"No use for me to set any more traps then ; if I stop here my winter hunt spoiled, for that devil never leave here while I set a trap."

"Why don't you trap him then?"

"Oh! he know too much; he know enough to keep an hotel."

After such an assertion I concluded that the effort would be useless.

A few days after he came in whining as usual, and imprecating his bad luck; it was needless trying to pacify him, to all I could say he had one retort:

"I poor man, my winter hunt spoilt, what do you care?" &c.

At length I got him to listen to me. I promised to go his round with him in the morning, and we would devise some means of outwitting the marauder. His countenance, however, clearly expressed

that he thought I must be a fool to think I could trap a wolverine.

It was snowing gently in the morning when we started; the line of traps lay for some distance along the river, then ceased for a mile or two till we reached a miniature lake, on the margin of which he had three. True enough the baits were all gone, and several of the traps sprung; so the snivel commenced to reappear on my comrade's countenance when the last was reached.

I was rather at my wit's end to devise a stratagem that promised success. At length a thought struck me, and I resolved to act upon it.

"Pick up your traps, Antoine, and bring them along."

Without a question he did so; following our previous course backwards we soon had them all gathered.

"Well, now, where do you get your bait from? where is it, man?" In a moment he produced it.

"Now," said I, "set your trap." A look certainly not denoting confidence in my skill as a trapper passed over his countenance; but he did exactly what I told him, and possibly with more than usual care. "Well, now, take all the other traps, about a dozen in number, and place them at short distances around it." This he did also.

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I continued; for the snow was coming down fast by this time, and we did so till not a vestige of one was to be seen. Then we started for home, I wishing with all my heart that my device would turn out successful. In the morning—I doubting still hoping—we returned. The ground was tramped down in every direction, while two of the traps were gone. An extraordinary track led towards the woods; this we followed, and soon overtook the object of our pursuit; which had a trap on a fore and another on a hind foot, a pair of boots that did not add to his powers of locomotion.

So vicious looked our foe, and so determined to do mischief if within reach of his pursuers, that I gave him the contents of a barrel at most destructive short range. He did not rob any more traps, I can vouch for.

From that date I was a great hunter in Antoine's estimation, if credence was to be placed in what he said. Over and over again he narrated the whole affair to the Indians, a dozen times I am sure I listened to it; but this I will say that, like old and simple stories we knew in our childhood, it was revived with variations and did not diminish in lustre.

Antoine's success was all he could desire after the above episode, and for the present no further mention was made by him of leaving the shanty.

Although the river is frozen across, we are never short of fish when the weather is sufficiently mild to permit our going out to capture them. Our modes of proceeding to accomplish our object are so novel to the English sportsman, that at least they deserve explanation.

First a hole is cut in the ice and over it is built a hut sufficiently large for a person to sit in. This diminutive shelter is made as dark as possible, an opening only being left in the roof for the uninterrupted passage of the pole of the fisherman's fish spear.

The sportsman inside the structure must be provided with a live bait, or if such is not procurable a wooden representative of one, loaded underneath with lead to keep it upright. Whichever of these used is lowered into the orifice in the ice, and frequently drawn to the surface, the fisherman in the mean time holding in his right-hand the spear, or more properly grains, with which he intends to strike his prey. At length a hungry trout has seen the lure and follows it to the surface, hovering about the ice-hole anxious for a chance to gratify his appetite. Down comes the spear, the victim is shoved to the bottom till the barbs have passed through him, when he is leisurely drawn to the surface, and thrown out upon the ice.

This is not slow work, for at this season the trout are greedy feeders on these northern rivers, so in the course of an hour many may be taken, the majority being of very large size.

The other plan is more simple. A strong line is carried by two persons, one at either end, and thus stretched across a rapid that from the velocity of its current is not frozen. From this main line are attached several droppers, at the termination of each being a hook baited with a shiner; if nothing else is obtainable, a piece of rind of pork will answer. These droppers are lowered into the current, and permitted even to drift under the ice. When a pluck from a fish is observable each person strikes, but does not draw out the fish that has probably become attached, for its struggles will not intimidate its companions from taking the other baits. By this means in a short space of time a trout may be secured on each hook. After the first captures have been made, no scarcity of bait need exist, for there is nothing more killing than a strip from the stomach of one of their fellows.

After all, the most that can be said of both these methods of taking fish is, that they are poaching, rascally inventions, and only justifiable when frail humanity are requiring food.

For several nights the wolves have been giving us

evidence of their vocal powers. They have often yelled so close to the shanty, that I feel convinced they are frequently within range of it, so with a charge of buck-shot in each barrel I kept wait for the gentry, but as usual under such circumstances they did not come. However, an hour after I had gone to bed they opened the concert, and the Indian lad awoke me. Slipping on sufficient clothes for the emergency, I noiselessly opened the door, glided round the corner of the house, so as to command a view of where the refuse from our cooking was thrown. On it and by it were five splendid fellows, each as large as a rough deer-hound, but twice as bulky. The stars were shining brightly, and the snow reflecting their light made it almost as clear as day, so there was no difficulty in taking aim. With the first barrel I tumbled over one fellow dead, with the other I did such injury as to cause the stricken animal to leave a very conspicuous blood-track in the snow.

The winter has nearly passed at last. I will not disguise that it was a dreary period, so much so as to make our lives a near approach to imprisonment. True there were occasional days when the temperature was not sufficiently low to frighten us from going to the river or having a scour over the barrens; but they were the exception, far from the rule; however, whenever we did, we reaped our reward, for nature has not

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bestowed animal life on this neighbourhood with a niggard hand. It was therefore with feelings of intense gratification that I saw in the mornings a hard crust upon the snow, indicative of thaw by day but of frost by night, but nevertheless a certain monitor of spring's advent.

The Indians having provided me with snow-shoes, I availed myself of the first chance to go in pursuit of moose; it was not long before they were found, and duly run down and killed. Whatever I thought once, it is needless to say my ideas at the present time are, that you might as well go into a barn-yard and shoot down domestic cattle. Unless to provide food when human beings would otherwise suffer from its want, I agree with Captain Hardy, a well-known, and most reliable authority on the field-sports of the Lower Provinces, that to kill moose when a heavy crust takes place is a most unjustifiable proceeding, so a description of the scenes and *modus operandi* I will leave out.

The maples, which are not very numerous in this locality, are perfectly spouting with sap. I have tapped several trees, and in a short time received a bucketful from each; but as we have not a pot sufficiently large to boil it down in, so as to obtain a commensurate reward for our labour, it has been decided not to attempt sugar making.

Independent of this notice of the approach of spring, the Indian boy saw a robin, and I have had the pleasure of listening to his sweet melodious notes. I hope the poor fellow has not been rash in getting so far north thus early, for the states neighbouring New York and Pennsylvania are his winter habitat.

From the rapidity with which the thaw has taken place after its commencement I have for some days expected that the ice upon the lake, from which our river flows, would break up. I know no more magnificent sight, one that impresses the beholder so thoroughly with his insignificance, than to behold the breaking up of ice upon an extensive lake or river. To those who have not spent their lives in northern climates, the entire scene is so novel and impressive that the beholder stands awe-stricken. Some years ago, when visiting Buffalo, I had the fortune to be an eye-witness to the breaking up of the ice on Lake Erie. It was my first experience of such a sight, and the impression that it made upon me was one that I shall never forget. Curiosity not unmixed with fear, pleasure alloyed with dread, both rapidly flitted through my brain as I wonderingly gazed upon the gigantic fields of snow-covered ice floating towards their destruction, and their vast surfaces a moment after collision with the shore severing into innumerable undefinable irregular fragments. Of course, where I

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was now residing I could not expect to witness anything so grand as a flow of ice entering Niagara River, for the stream that passed our shanty was but a rivulet in comparison to the great connecting link that unites Lakes Erie and Ontario. Nevertheless, I looked most anxiously forward to the breaking up, and sincerely hoped it would not occur during the night.

I was sitting in the shanty tying some flies, for I eagerly anticipated the period when I should be able to indulge in my favourite pursuit, and therefore did not delay getting all my fishing-tackle in thorough order before that time arrived that the services of my trout-rod would be called into play, when I heard Antoine's voice suddenly raised, requesting me to come out and join him.

Now my half-breed Frenchman was not of an excitable temperament, so I knew that something serious had occurred to cause him to raise his voice so high. When I joined him he was standing axe in hand by the wood pile, for he had been engaged cutting up firewood. As soon as he was aware that I was at his side, he inquired, "Hear you the ice?" I listened, and could clearly detect a grunting heavy sound. After a few minutes' silence he said, "Soon, Cap, we have plenty clear water; the ice be down here in half-an hour."

And true to his statement the advance guard of the broken fields commenced to make its appearance in the time specified. Wishing to have the best view of the novel sight, I took my stand upon one of the rocks that abutted on the river, and contracted its breadth into half its ordinary size. At first only a few spasms in the surface appeared, soon after followed by large rents, which were ultimately succeeded by a wall of peaks and slabs piled upon one another in the wildest confusion. As they floated towards me down the comparatively speaking placid pool above the rock on which I stood, but a trifling alteration took place in their outline; however, at the moment it entered the surging, boiling, contracted rapid, each portion of the floating ice appeared to struggle with the other to retain the surface; thus pieces, sometimes tons in bulk, would be shot up over the ice underneath, ultimately to fall down and break into a thousand glittering prisms. I do not exaggerate when I say that I observed numerous blocks of ice over a foot deep and yards in diameter shelved up fifteen or twenty paces upon the shore, while the continual grinding, crushing, and snapping of miniature bergs produced a din that might have been heard miles off; the only sound that I can liken to it is a continued succession of forest trees falling.

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Just below the rapid where the water eddied with sufficient calmness to make it apparently a splendid trout pool, an immense pine snag had lodged. Often previously I had looked at it and wished that I had the power to remove it, or that it had not been there, for I felt convinced that when the fishing season commenced it would rob me of many a fly, possibly of many a yard of gut. With what satisfaction then did I see the irresistible wall of ice strike it; for a few moments there was a halt in its movement, but the rear-guard pushing on the advance, gave additional power, and the decayed pine-tree gradually swung round, halted again for a few instants when its branches caught the opposite shore, then disengaging itself floated before the irresistible chaotic mass.

All that night and the next day the ice continued to flow onwards, but in diminished quantities, till on the third day not a vestige remained to tell of winter's mantle that had so long locked the lake above in her embrace; so winter had fairly broken up, and soon the country around will be free for me to travel in whatever direction the spirit prompts.

Few days pass that some incident or other does not transpire to afford amusement or food for study, and our lives are far from being as dull and un-

interesting as might be imagined. One great source of regret I am constantly recurring to, viz., not having half a bushel or more seed potatoes, for from the amount of clearing we have done to supply firewood and building material for the shanty, there is nearly half an acre now eligible for the cultivation of that excellent and most useful bulb, moreover the soil is admirably suited for their growth, and with the top dressing of ashes that we could give it, would doubtless produce a noble crop, if late frosts should not occur.

My *protégé*, who has been away for a ramble in the woods, for all his spare time is spent in setting snares or inventing infernal machines with which to trap the unwary beasts or birds of the locality, has just returned, grinning from ear to ear. This I know is an index of more than ordinary success.

“What have you got there, youngster?”

“Catchee baby mooin,” struggling hard to hold some animal which he has in a sack, and which appears to be very unwilling to remain captive.

“Mooin ! I don’t understand ; young bear do you say ?”

“Yes, Capen, young mooin ; young devil, he scratch and bite awful, you see ;” so he turned the sack up, and out fell the little snarling vixen.

The prize was about the size of a small King Charles

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spaniel; but in its small carcase existed the ferocity of a full-grown representative of his family. No efforts to conciliate had the slightest effect, so after it had bitten me through the boot, and torn into shreds a pair of my unmentionables, the young Indian was ordered to build a house for his pet out-doors. This was soon accomplished, and the establishment smelt sweeter after the cub's expulsion.

As the she bear is very attached to her young, it is almost unaccountable how this little termagant was alone. Poteen found him and drove him up a sapling, his barking bringing the boy to the place. It was lucky for the small Indian that the mother did not return while he was up the tree, or it would have been all up a tree with him.

Antoine for some days past harps upon the subject of opening a trade with such Indians as may be in the locality, and urges quite eloquently that the sum of money to be made through doing so would be immense. To all this I turn an indifferent ear, for the reason that such were not the inducements for my coming here; beside, the limited stock of things I have are now scarcely more than necessary for our own use, more especially if anything should occur to prevent our leaving at the time originally intended.

I suppose that seeing the subject was not interesting

to me, he altered his tactics, and asked if I would object to his leaving me for a time, more especially as he thought he saw a prospect of bettering himself. I replied, I would rather he did not, but that he was his own master; and wishing to terminate the conversation I took my gun and went out.

The young bear had been only three days a captive. I was lying on my bunk smoking my evening pipe, for supper was over, when the boy came in, for he had been sent to procure firewood; tears were in his eyes. As I had never seen him cry before, I thought something serious must have happened, so I asked him what was the matter.

"My moo-in gone," he said, and fairly broke down.

So I had to turn comforter and assure him, "poor little baby, he shall have another moo-in;" but it was a long time before my consolation appeared beneficial. On examination we discovered the cub had slipped his collar. "Good riddance," thought I.

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE floating ice had scarcely disappeared from the river before wild-duck made their appearance, not at first in large flights, but in half-dozens or more, the advance guard of the main body.

It is extraordinary the instinct which teaches these birds to know when they may advance with safety into a country that heretofore has been ice-bound. Although in the autumn I have known them make a mistake, and linger about a favourite haunt till they have ultimately got frozen in—not figuratively, for I have found them hard and fast in such a position—still in spring they never overstep the limits of prudence.

First came the pin-tail, or pheasant duck, always the forerunner, and, consequently, the most adven-

turous of his family; not wild as they are generally found to be upon the prairies, but reckless of all danger as long as they can follow the river's course. As their flesh is ever good, and a most acceptable change from the diet on which we had been living for months, I availed myself of their arrival to add to our larder. In the course of an afternoon, certainly within two hours' shooting, I killed over three dozen, and only desisted because my stock of ammunition was commencing to show visible signs of diminution.

Of all shooting I have ever participated in, this was the most old-fogeyish; for I had nought to do but sit upon the rock that formed the gate into the rapid, and wait for the birds' arrival; and as the river was not tortuous for over some distance above my position, their approach could be seen long before they came within range. Moreover, this work required no retriever, for the carcasses of those that fell in the stream were generally washed ashore before they had floated many yards.

There was feasting in camp that night, for the pin-tail duck, in these inland regions, is a splendid table bird, well fed and tender, and worthy of being considered a *bonne bouche* among epicures.

After the pin-tails had passed to more northern haunts, the glorious green-headed mallard came;

although progenitor of our tame duck, with which every one is familiar, still familiarity in this instance does not breed contempt.

That grey breast and lustrous green neck is the perfection of combination of colour, and the strength and velocity with which his strong wings cleave the air, adds to his other attractions. A prince among game I pronounce him, and there are few who deserve the name of sportsmen will doubt that such an appellation is not deservedly bestowed.

Beyond killing a few couple I did not molest them, for although anyhow I might have knocked over a dozen, they were not required, and so I permitted them unmolested to proceed to their far-north breeding ground, from which in autumn they will doubtlessly return with replenished numbers.

The flight of the mallard continued for nearly a week, the rear-guard being better fed, and, consequently, in better condition than those who had gone before. These were the drones of the migratory herd, willing to enjoy the advantages exposed by their more adventurous comrades.

But duck shooting did not here terminate for more than six weeks after the ice had broken; in fact, there was not an hour of the day but that teal, black duck, and mergansers in large

flocks followed the course of the river to their breeding haunts.

Geese also passed in large numbers during the day, generally too high for an ordinary gun to do certain execution; but if at early hours, or late in the evening, twenty-five or thirty yards above the river course would not be above their elevation. Can it be wondered at, then, with all these magnificent birds hourly passing within range, that although I desisted from shooting, I took my stand, which was frequently directly under their course, to watch their progress?

To one skilled in fiddle-strings and wind instruments the call of howh! howh! may not be attractive; but fortunately we are not all formed in the same mould, or possess the same partialities.

How lucky that it should be so, for if not, every one would be falling in love with the same baby face, which would be certain to lead to a vast amount of bloodshed; for nought angers a man so much as finding he has a rival in his love affairs, unless it be witnessing a stranger or objectionable person abusing his dog.

I have not said anything regarding the swans, who also are included among the migrators who go north at this season of the year. During light many of

these large handsome birds were constantly to be seen cleaving their way through the raw atmosphere to their summer haunts. At night their voices appeared incessantly calling, no small proof that their habits are partially nocturnal.

Above the shanty, on an old limbless hemlock, a pair of bald-eagles had found a suitable perch. Their position was well chosen, for several hundred yards above and below their perch, they could see whatever approached them that followed the river's course. As soon as they had adopted this roosting place I should have either dispossessed them, or killed one or both; but I had read Audubon's description of the pursuit of a swan by an eagle, and wished to witness such a scene.

In the morning I had been round with Antoine lifting traps; the tramp had been a severe one, and, by-the-bye, I was very nearly being rendered unable to narrate further exploits, for his gun went off while straddling over a log, but fortunately did no more damage than carrying away the right pocket of my shooting-coat. It is not agreeable to be shot at when receiving pay from Her Majesty for submitting to such a process, even when you know that a pension awaits you for life, if called upon in future years to stamp about with a cork-leg, or from the loss of an

arm be unable to dress without assistance ; but I most decidedly object to a charge of No. 6 in the small of the back, or, in fact, in any other part of my person, although administered by a friend. So I postponed the remainder of my tramp for an indefinite future time, and found my way homewards. After a few mouthfuls of lunch I lit my pipe, and sauntered to my favourite perch on the rock ; for down the channel of the river, a cool current of air ever passed, and the situation seldom was without attractions to the observant lover of natural history.

In the distance I heard the familiar call of swans ; gazing intently south I with difficulty managed to make out their snow-white column. Gradually as my sight had attained the proper focus, and the phalanx advanced towards me, each individual that composed the force became distinguishable.

On the hemlock were perched the two bald-headed eagles ; no further perceptible movement being apparent in them than that their height obviously had increased, and their width diminished. From previous observation I had noticed this before ; it doubtless was a bracing of the system together, previous to engaging in an undertaking more than usually hazardous.

When I noticed this alteration in the figure of the birds of prey, I became convinced that I was about

to see what I had so long and earnestly craved to behold. It was a sight to witness, a drama about to be played, that the stay-at-home naturalist, the accepted authority upon all subjects in connexion with the animal creation never sees, but still gets credit for witnessing—and why so? because he is read deeply in the wanderer's experiences, and indites with flowing pen and with subtle language from them—and on this borrowed knowledge writes an article that goes forth to the world to be applauded, quoted, and ultimately the scribbler is credited with the reputation of being a great observer of the animal creation.

I wish I had command of the most eloquent language, for here is a chance to bring it with purpose into play; but, unfortunately, I have been reared in camp and barrack, where the most familiar sound to my ear was the hoarse bray of the trumpet, or the clarion notes of the bugle. Nor am I come of a literary race, for my progenitors for many, many generations, have had no other ambition than to lead companies, or head regiments.

The Indian is a great hunter, because through a long line of ancestors the love of venerie is hereditary; the game of the present day are wilder than when bolts and cross-bows were used in their pursuit, for the ancestors of them have learned that it is no

longer safe to come within the same distances of man.

So it is with scribblers; nine instances out of ten their forefathers have lived by their pen, or made a reputation by it. In youth, from the buoyance of that period they may have neglected it, but ultimately they bow their necks to the yoke, or permit the harness to be put upon them, like the beast of labour that had, no matter how long ago, been broken in. At first their brain may be rusty, and the pen refuse to indite their thoughts, but only limited perseverance is necessary to bring them into the channel that those from whence they are sprung have pursued. Why this bitter, long rhodomontade? Because critics will cut up a work that has emanated from practical experience, when all they know upon the subject is what they have read.

But to revert to the swans; no sooner were they within a hundred yards of the bald eagles, than both birds of prey, with a velocity that was astonishing, dashed upwards into the heavens till nearly lost to sight, and the noisy host of white-plumed birds broke up their formation and scattered in all directions, for well did they appear to know the hostility of this demonstration. On outstretched wing, with rapid stroke, a swan so large and strong that age must

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be credited to him, dashed down the river course. When nearly opposite to me a tearing, rending, rushing sound reverberated from the air above ; it was the eagles descending upon their destined victim. But the battle is not ever to the strong, and the persecuted bird avoided the impetuous swoop—but how?—by dashing down into the pellucid water and diving beneath its surface.

Disappointed the birds of prey hovered aloft; in a few moments again they swooped downwards, but their destined prey knew the safety of his position, and dived before the assailants could strike him. Again and again this ruse was practised, and the baffled persecutors returned to their roosting-place.

It was a glorious example of how the strong can be worsted by the weak, the tyrant by the powerless, and if I could have done as I pleased I would have taken that swan home, given him the best my limited larder afforded, a secure night's rest, and turned him loose in the morning to seek his companions, and afterwards taken my gun and have had a shot at his persecutors.

For a long time I puzzled my brain why an old bird, full of experience, should have selected the hazardous route—for those that flew landways were unmolested. I am willing to accredit reasoning

powers to the rest of the animal creation, besides allowing man alone to monopolise them; and for this reason, previous long experience had taught him how to cope with such a foe, and where to regain his relatives whom he had been forced so summarily to desert.

No schoolboy has not read of Quintus Curtius, and in his innermost soul lauded his valour; but here was an insignificant bird running the fire of two implacable foes, to draw them away from those less capable of escaping their attacks.

That night most unexpectedly Antoine informed me that he purposed starting north on a trading expedition among the Indians on the upper waters of the Ottawa.

This took me quite by surprise, for I had no idea that he intended leaving me before I returned to civilisation.

On this point I expressed my opinion strongly, still he argued with me, that as his absence would not last over a few weeks, and that he should make out of his trip a lot of money, I finally consented to his going.

But I had not got rid of him yet, for just as we were turning into our respective bunks, after having a very strong tumbler of whisky-punch each, he told

me that his entire venture would be ruined if I would not let him have some of my stores.

At first I hummed and hawed to this request, but ultimately acceded to it; so I handed him over a spare gun, several pounds of powder, a couple of bags of shot, as well as a host of gew-gaws of Birmingham manufacture. When I awoke next morning he had gone; how he had taken his load away I could not conceive.

A favourite animal of mine is the fat, well-to-do, comfortable-looking musk-rat, generally called by the Indians musquash. About them exists none of the disagreeable associations we always possess towards the common brown or Norway rat; and although a rodent, the North American animal would have been much more agreeably christened, and made far more popular, if the Indian synonym had been preserved.

On a large-sized tributary of the river, about a mile distant from our residence, I often have taken my seat to watch the busy industrious creatures sporting about in their favourite element. Their apparent confidence in the goodwill of the intruder, the mingled air of curiosity and inquiry with which they regard you, the beauty of their large intelligent dark eye, soon cause them to be regarded as friends

in whose habits you centre a large amount of interest. The similarity of the musquash to the beaver is so very striking that the inexperienced are often induced to mistake them for the young of the latter animal, for the only external perceptible difference is that the beaver's tail is flat horizontally, the musk-rat's vertically, and I should imagine in consequence far better suited both to steer and assist in propelling its possessor forward, when submerged beneath the surface of the water. Although during the whole winter, when I have visited this retired stream, around the air-holes in the ice, numbers of these pets of mine were to be seen, or evidences of their vicinity from the quantity of shells of the freshwater mussel they had left on the margin of the open water, still their numbers never appeared so great as on this spring evening. Look in whatever direction I chose, the water was being cleft by these indefatigable children of the lakes and rivers of this forest land, all apparently intent on the important business of building a new home to replace that of last season, which had been washed away by the freshets that had occurred at the breaking-up of the ice. Their power in the water is really surprising, for frequently they will be observed pushing or dragging towards the site chosen for their new mansion

branches of trees, and bunches of reeds so large as almost to hide from view the persevering little creatures that direct the course of the floating *débris*. Moreover, the very greatest affection and understanding apparently exists between the male and female, for if the wind or current be too strong for one to transport the load to the destination it is intended for, a long low and plaintive whistle will immediately call the mate to assist in the navigation of the prize. How it is anchored when it reaches the place intended, I never could tell, but it is secured. At the same time it must be remembered that [their houses are never built in the current, but in bays or inlets, where, however, there would be sufficient wind to remove them if such a precaution were not taken. When a branch of a size larger than the musk-rats choose to make use of is brought by either to the spot chosen for their future home, the small limbs are dexterously lopped off, and the main artery allowed to float away. Rushes, however, form the principal portion of which this water residence is composed, the fine limbs of trees being only utilised for uprights between which to weave in the softer material, or here and there introduced around the sides to impart strength, which it would not otherwise possess.

Although the male and female are very gentle and very loving to each other, they are excessively jealous of their rights, and attack an intruder of their species with such fury and vindictiveness as to cause the water fairly to boil around the scene of battle. This evening I was rewarded with a view of such a rencontre.

Just opposite to my position, but across the stream within thirty or more yards from where I sat, a pair of musquash were exceedingly busy, every few moments one or other departed to return with something necessary for the construction of their house. At length the larger one appeared to be longer absent than usual, and anxiety to have taken possession of the partner left behind, for he or she, I think it was the lady, would every few moments cease from work, sit up on hind legs and gaze anxiously about. Presently above me appeared a limb of a tree, nearly six feet long, and about the thickness of my finger at the larger portion of the main stem; slowly it came floating down the tranquil current, gradually edging off towards the opposite shore. A little closer inspection enabled me to detect the builder of the domicile across the water, who evidently had no easy task in hand, and was not sparing his strength to accomplish it. While ad-

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miring the pluck and perseverance of the little labourer, a head of another musk-rat popped up above the surface of the water in his immediate vicinity ; the new comer evidently having designs on the property of my acquaintance. Whether or not, his arrival was evidently far from agreeable, if I may judge from the manner of his reception. The stranger was much larger than the other, and I should deem from his darker coat, older, and of course more experienced. Evidently conscious of superior strength, he avoided parley and proceeded at once to exercise a high hand, by making a dash at the possessor of the branch. This assault, however, was dexterously avoided, the smaller musk-rat instantly diving out of sight, the larger taking possession instantly of the coveted prize and using every exertion to direct it towards the side on which I was sitting. I thought how broken-hearted my poor little friend would be to lose his lawful property, and with what a long and disappointed face he would confide his woes to the partner of his bosom, when he reappeared again and took hold of the end of the limb, evidently using all his power to counteract the exertions of his antagonist.

The struggle lasted but a few moments ; the larger animal let go his hold and made for the other, the

latter refusing the contest, again diving to reappear on the surface at the other end of the branch a moment or two after its possessor had regained his old position. Again there was a pulling match, succeeded by the original owner being driven off. However he was not vanquished, only plotting how he could reobtain possession of the coveted prize. By this time the misappropriator, with his spoil, had got within twenty yards of where the residence of his victim was being built, the despoiled close to him with a watchful eye on his late treasure, his wife busily engaged in her architectural pursuits. I heard a low long whistle, the female raised her head, listened, looked towards the bough and noiselessly glided into the water; in a moment or two afterwards she was beside her partner; then ensued a short confab, and both dived, reappearing immediately on the surface on either side of the thief. Without an instant's hesitation the interloper was attacked; for several minutes a terrific battle ensued, if just estimate could be formed from the amount of struggling and splashing that took place, and that my friends were victorious was apparent, for I had the satisfaction of seeing them safely moor the contested branch among the other materials that were collected to weave into their future domicile.

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But night was closing in, the large Canadian owl was hooting from his solitary resting-place among the boughs of some sombre hemlock, a sure sign that darkness would soon drape the landscape, so I retired from the lone woodland stream and left it to its nocturnal visitors.

CHAPTER IX.

A WALK through Canadian forest land during nearly all portions of the year, especially towards sunset, is oppressive and saddening from the sombreness of the foliage and the intense stillness that reigns around; however, at this season it is quite a contrast to the rule, for every direction now has found a voice. The stranger who cares not for the study of nature, and consequently knows little about it, would listen with ears of astonishment to the number and variety of notes that issue from every nook and cranny, particularly if his acquaintance with uncleared land had been confined to winter and autumn.

When the cold biting winter has passed and the snows fled, and the genial rays of the spring sun warm the surface of the earth, innumerable varieties of animal life which have hitherto been torpid are restored to animation, and from them

proceed the greater portion of the curious, but none the less melodious notes that break the stillness of the surrounding shadow land.

Yes, it is to the reptilia that all this harmony of sound is due, rejoicing doubtless that a new life to them is born, and that a period of captivity and inactivity is passed. The birds warble forth their dulcet notes in spring, the children of man at that season seem more joyous in their out-door sports, and give vent more frequently to their pleasure with upraised merry laugh ; as with the winged beauties, as with the youth of our own race, so it is with the lower orders of the animal creation.

But to revert to the choristers of the primeval forest of the lone western lands, chief among them, when water is in the vicinity, is the common American toad. Although far from attractive in appearance, he is not nearly so ugly as his English relative. Listen to his strange solemn voice; it is not harsh or disagreeable, so far in fact from such in its thrilling cadence, that it cannot be imagined to proceed from so unattractive a shape, or so expressionless a visage. Inactive and sluggish both by formation and inclination, scarcely changing position for hours, again and again he utters his vibratory notes throughout the livelong night. Next among the musicians is

the little tree-frog, a tiny active fellow, not three-quarters of an inch long, whose whistle is as joyous as that of the common house cricket, only much more voluminous. He utters his quick chirp, never tiring, never ceasing, while the sun's rays are not pouring down upon his perch.

Another of this band of choristers is the green-headed frog, the basso profundo of the woodland stream; his deep-toned voice may be heard for half a mile of a still evening. As frogs go, he is a pretty creature, with yellow throat, and black-green barred back; a very bully is he too among the smaller reptilia, who hush in grave respect when he chooses to give utterance. But his life, with all his pomposity of manner, is not without its dangers, for the water adder and the black snake love to make him their prey, and when the hour of hot pursuit by his bloodthirsty foe comes, how rapidly does he change his pompous notes for the timorous squeak of the most insignificant of his genus. A close observer of nature can trace a likeness in every animal, however humble it may be in the scale, to some representative of the human family; thus I have often thought this frog to resemble a purse-proud, upstart citizen, probably a guardian of the poor, blatant, bullying, and pompous, while he possesses wealth; sycophantic, grovelling, and pluckless in the days of adversity.

The snow-water by this time having been washed out of all the neighbouring streams, it is time to commence preparations for the capture of the vermillion-speckled, copper-burnished flanked trout, for until that takes place the most skilful angler may throw his fly ever so lightly, hide his shadow ever so skilfully, or fish with the longest line that strong wrist and pliant rod can carry from him, but all his efforts will go unrewarded. It is a strange, but nevertheless a true fact, that although the trout of these distant waters will take the bait with avidity when ice covers both their river and lake haunts, they perfectly disregard any allurements during the season that their homes are swollen into flood by the influx of melted snow. All I have questioned for information as to the reason of this, have responded unanimously, "Don't know!" Thought, and the knowledge that there is a cause for every result, induce me to think, that snow-water being more penetrating than that of rain, becomes impregnated more strongly by the decayed vegetation, causing the fish in consequence to become listless, sick, and disinclined to feed.

I have frequently taken a cupful of snow-water from indentations and ridges on the hillside where I knew it was unalloyed with any other, and it has

always possessed a very dark colour as well as a stringent taste. In fact, the former appearance is so apparent, that I believe I can always detect its presence in a stream from the dull neutral tint it imparts to all waters it mixes with. Such being the case, will not the most sceptical acknowledge that I have good grounds for coming to the previous conclusion ?

The water of Northern American rivers is wonderfully clear, with a bright greenish shade, unless at such times as they are swollen by floods, when if their course has flowed through heavily-timbered lands, they become as thick and muddy as it is possible to imagine ; those that flow over barrens, on the other hand, although increased in volume by rainfall, suffer almost imperceptibly in colouration.

My *début* was not a success. I tried several of the best streams and reaches without doing more than raising a few insignificant fish. In England I might have changed my flies, attributing to their non-attractiveness my failure ; but here it was not necessary, for when trout are on the feed they are never fastidious.

However, my time was not thrown away, for on my walk home I had opportunities of observing some of the most interesting sights that the eye of the lover of nature can rest upon.

To shorten my journey, instead of following the erratic course of the river I struck across a marsh, the edge of which margined a large shallow pool. I was about leaving its brilliant green spongy surface when a wild-duck, the female of our common mallard, flushed at my feet. After flying a few yards she dropped into the weeds, apparently incapable of proceeding further. Skye, my little favourite, was with me ; in an instant he started in pursuit. To recall him I deemed unnecessary, for well I knew the bird could take care of herself, and that she was only perpetrating a ruse to draw the intruder from the vicinity of her nest. In a few moments after, the duck again was on the wing, a second time to fall as if overpowered with the exertion. This appeared to give confidence to my companion, for giving tongue in his delight at the hope of making an immediate capture, he rushed on after his would-be prey. A third time the trick was repeated, the duck on this occasion flying further, and ultimately dropping into the river ; but previous victimising did not appear one iota to have damped Skye's hopes of success. In the mean time I had been carefully examining the vicinity, for a nest I knew was not far distant. In a clump of last year's withered sedge I discovered eight eggs, which, judging from their opaque and dead-looking colour, I deemed were more than half

hatched. If I had examined them minutely I possibly could have told more closely how long they had been sat upon; but I preferred to leave my curiosity unsatisfied, as by gratifying it I should have been obliged to handle the eggs, which might and frequently does cause a duck to forsake her nest. Soon after I had resumed my tramp my dog joined me; his expression was of impishness personified, and the more I chaffed him, in such words as, "Poor fellow! then he did not catch the duck," the more ashamed of himself he apparently became.

I have often thought that this canine friend could understand all I said. There is not a doubt that he did some sentences; for instance, in the morning, if I was preparing to go out, and did not wish his society, I had but to say, "No little dogs with me to-day;" and although he had been using every effort to attract my attention, and evincing the liveliest interest in my preparations, he would at once sneak into a corner and regard me askance with the most heart-broken expression. Again, if of an evening after dark the shanty door were opened, Skye's greatest anxiety appeared to be to get out first. To tease him I would retain the door sufficiently ajar to prevent his egress; impatiently but quietly he would wait

ready for a rush when such became practicable. However, if I said to him, "No night for little dogs to be out, big wolves outside ready to eat him up," his hair would rise on his back, the sides of his lips curl so as to expose his teeth, uttering at the same time the angriest and most defiant growls.

Reverting to my tramp homewards. The woods are now fairly filled with migratory birds that have spent the winter in the more hospitable climate of Mexico or the Southern States. Few of them are such songsters as are to be found in Great Britain, if we except the hermit thrush and American robin, both of whom possess very sweet voices; but they do not appear so fond of exercising their vocal powers as the warblers of our home woods and hedge-rows. The woodpeckers, at this season, are also most noisy, and gifted with even a more than ordinary amount of energy. Their day seems to be taken up with incessant squabbling or magging, for each appears to have a voice in his neighbour's business, if not to interfere further. I watched a pair which had taken possession of a hole in a large limb of a dead tree, evidently with the intention of commencing housekeeping therein. In half an hour a dozen visitors at least must have come to see them; and the angry high words that immediately after the arrival of each stranger took place,

was a disgrace to society, whether among birds or human beings. I do not think that the callers were gallants come to make love to the bride, for then she would be probably timid, bashful, and silent; but it was quite the reverse, for the lady's voice was as highly pitched as her lord's, and her manner equally rude and objectionable.

Within a quarter of a mile of the clearing which we have formed by supplying the shanty fire with fuel, a few yards from what has now become quite a path, I heard a hare scream from some long bottom grass. Skye in a moment was all eyes and ears, ready for a rush; but by a single word I checked him, for he is now under most perfect control. After a few moments the scream was repeated more to our front, and soon afterwards a hare staggered across the track. A word of encouragement and Skye was off, for I thought poor pussy with the long ears had been seized by a weasel. Soon I was convinced that I was in error as to my supposition; for again and again I heard the dog struggling with something of no ordinary size or strength, so I hurried to his assistance. To my gratification I found his antagonist to be a very large mink, whom his repeated shaking had by this time reduced to obedience. Why my little attendant had attacked so powerful a foe instead of

the hare was to me a mystery ; but as I said before, he was imbued with more than ordinary sense, and, as he looked up in my face with his loving hazel eyes, he accepted my praise with the dignity of one knowing himself worthy of approbation. This mink would have been quite a prize late in autumn, for then they possess a beautiful dark close fur ; but at this season its pelt was useless, the old coat having come off in patches, the new one only beginning to grow.

Snipe, which had commenced arriving immediately after the thaw set in, were now assembled in immense numbers on all the low-lying wet lands that margined the rivers and lakes, and in the bogs on the hillsides. They are so remarkably tame that they never attempted to flush till almost stepped upon, and even then their flight did not exceed thirty or forty yards. If ammunition in out of the way places like this did not require economising, I could have made such bags as would have provoked the disbelief of my countrymen. How is it that they will seldom believe in any performance that occurs abroad surpassing their own home deeds ?

When I was a lad, in a short winter day, I killed twenty-two brace of woodcocks. A few years since I happened to mention the subject in a London club. A gentleman whom I had met previously, and who

had shot a good deal in the South of England, without expressing himself so, appeared sceptical, and remarked :

"That must have been in some of your foreign shooting trips."

I answered, "In Ireland."

"I knew it," said he, continuing; "you fellows who go abroad do most extraordinary things. Why, I never killed a quarter of that number in the best preserved covers in England, and how could you make such a bag where there are no game laws?"

Of course, after an argument so clinching, coming from a person who called the Emerald Island abroad, and asserted it did not possess game laws, I said nothing; but there was a titter on every listener's face, and the laugh might have been—I say might—have been against me.

As none of the snipe here show any indication of pairing, I am inclined to believe that their great breeding-ground is further to the north; still of a calm still evening, after the sun has gone down, you can hear them giving utterance to that peculiar bleating call, that at home is generally accepted as an indication that they have mated. Thus snipe, like many other birds who are almost silent nearly all the year round, find that their voice possesses a new

or long unused note in spring, which they discontinued when tired of, as children would a toy that they had perfectly revelled over when first they became its owner. Possibly it may be that the birds that bleat want a mate, so cease to do so when paired.

Killing a dozen snipe in almost as many minutes, I finished off shooting by putting both barrels into a flock of blue-winged teal. I had seen these handsome birds several times when in the marsh; but although apparently not afraid of me, they still contrived to direct their flight far beyond my reach. This could scarce have been wariness, for I was out in open exposed ground when they came within range, my reward being eight mature well-fed birds killed dead, and three cripples, only one of which I recovered.

CHAPTER X.

THE canoe, which has been useless since winter set in, will, now that the ice has gone, be in daily requisition. Rest, however, seems not to have improved it, for when floated it leaked like a seive, so there is at least a day's work upon it before its services can be made available. Thus young Red-skin with the unpronounceable name, but generally called by me "Sugar-tooth," or more frequently still, "Sugar," was despatched to the woods to gather gum to cover such places as let in the water. The Indians, all of them, even the squaws, are wondrously skilful in building birch-bark canoes, and in repairing them. I have never met a white man who can approach them in constructing these buoyant little crafts, and the mechanical tools they employ are of the simplest description, generally only an axe and knife, sometimes in addition a spokeshave—still they are so beautifully finished that any one would suppose

they had been fabricated by the most skilled workman, with every implement at command that a carpenter could think of.

Not being able to get on without Sugar, I lounged into the shanty to enjoy a quiet smoke and undisturbed thought. I might have been half an hour in fairyland, possibly more, when the sharp bark of Skye and the suppressed growl of Poteen recalled my scattered wits, for I knew some one was approaching. On going to the door I saw Master Red-skin bounding along with his load on his back, and a grin on his face that denoted that he had made an important discovery.

"Oh, Cap," he commenced as soon as within speaking distance, "I seed sich a mooin" (Indian for bear). "Get your gun, Cap, I show him you most in a minute. Come, Capen, do" (he always addressed me so when he wanted a favour done).

I took down my gun, and while extracting the old charges young Sugar informed me that while stripping some tamarack roots for sewing up the rents in the canoe he heard a log roll over. Quietly he picked up the result of his labour, and went to investigate the cause, doubtless at the same time suspecting it. A white man probably could not have approached the bear without giving alarm; but an

Indian can do anything that is necessary to make a successful stalk, aye, crawl up to game as stealthily and silently as a snake upon its prey.

“Well, what did you see?”

“Sich a big mooin, a long-legged mooin, and he no see me, so I come to fetch you.”

Calling Poteen, and ordering Skye home, I followed my little guide for nearly a mile; the wind was in our favour so no detour was necessary. After a cautious stalk of a hundred yards we reached where the boy had been gathering the tamarack roots, which he pointed out with pantomimic actions, then indicated the position of the log. Leading the way on hands and knees, I soon spied it, but no bear. Examining the ground, I found it had lately been scratched on the surface, where the dead piece of timber had laid, also the bark was pulled off the decayed wood in several places to enable master Bruin to catch with his prehensile lips the wood-lice and other insects that had obtained a sanctuary underneath. I never doubted that the lad had spoken the truth, but even if I had, the signs I saw before me were most conclusive evidence of his statement. The only thing I feared was that the young Indian in retiring to give me notice was too hurried, and thus had broken a dead limb and so had given warning of his presence to the game.

The dog expressed such eagerness to be let go, evidently scenting the game, that at last I permitted him, for I had no fear for his safety, he being none of your headstrong, reckless animals, but one that knew most thoroughly how to take care of himself. Still I thought he would have pluck to snap the bear's heels, and thus drive him up a tree—a performance any Indian cur will do with perfect impunity; in fact, I am certain little Skye would, but I feared his valour getting the better of his discretion, particularly if I should come in the vicinity of the quarry before it treed.

Waiting for some sound to guide our future movements, soon Poteen's voice rung clear and sharp through the woods; again and again it echoed over the forest with a vindictiveness I was far from prepared for. Sugar and I sprung over the fallen timber, rushed through the close-knitted cedars, struggled through underbrush and briers, still the further we went the more distant became the dog's voice. At length young Red-skin proposed our directing our steps for the river, which was not distant over a quarter of a mile, as the chase appeared to be making in that direction, although further up stream. Acting on the impulse of the moment, although then tolerably out of wind, we briskly struggled through the brush till we reached its margin. The stream

having fallen considerably below high-water line, without serious impediment we followed up its course, Poteen still giving vent to his feelings with the most angry barks.

At length there was a partial silence, then a few angry half-smothered notes, when just as I cleared by wading an immense granite boulder that barred my path, I saw the bear leaving the water on the reverse side, about a hundred and fifty yards above me, with the dog close in his rear. In a moment I pitched my gun to the shoulder; with a smooth bore it was but a very slim chance, still I pulled the trigger, giving quite six inches of elevation. At the first report Bruin threw his head up and shook it several times, the ball from the left barrel, although the line of fire was apparently correct, I should think, from it striking the water first, ricocheted over his back. At the first shot I was not impressed with the belief that I had hit my mark, still I believe I went so close as to render it rather unpleasant.

As soon as both hound and game were out of the water, the dog's voice rang forth as determinedly as ever, and I commenced to believe that Poteen was a very ill-used animal by my doubting his pluck, and that he would have the noble revenge of throwing my words in his maligner's teeth by ultimately tree-

ing the bear. So down stream we ran to where there was a ford, if a place could be called so that was up to your knee one step, to your shoulders the next, and if you deviated to the right or left one yard, over the head with something to spare. Placing my ammunition in my cap, and pulling it well over my head, I made the first plunge, not stopping to hesitate, for to hesitate in such an undertaking, is ultimately to funk it altogether. I prospered till I was congratulating myself that I had got wonderfully well over the first portion, for so far I had only been half-thigh deep, when plump I went off a rock up to my ribs, and commenced to feel the current lifting me, when fortunately I felt with my foot a boulder whose surface I gained, and from there the shore, without further accident, a pole which I picked up on the beach being the means under providence vouchsafed to save me from a swim. But Sugar, poor child, had no such luck (he was only thirteen years of age); refusing to be left behind, he was set swimming early in the proceedings, and landed half-drowned on the side with myself, but quite one hundred yards lower down stream.

For some minutes we had not heard Poteen; I noticed this while crossing the ford, but I accounted for it by his voice being drowned by the sound of the

rushing water. This made me impatient, for I wanted to be moving after my bath, and no doubt I expressed it, for young Red-skin looked up in my face and said :

“No hurry, Cap; him,” meaning Poteen, “a good pup.”

I discovered afterwards that they were bedfellows, and Master Sugar did not wish his chum's character aspersed. Well, we listened and waited, waited and listened half an hour; as cold an half-hour as I wish my greatest enemy to pass, and were about retracing our steps across the river, when in the distance, aye quite a mile away, the voice of my dog was distinguishable. Again there was a rush for it; but the first quarter of a mile was most execrable travelling, log lay over and was interlaced with log, while hemlock and cedar, with a fair proportion of long straggling thorns, combined to prevent aught in the shape of animal, let alone six feet of humanity, getting through it. To those who know a cedar swamp, I have said enough; to those who do not, my advice is, go and try a helter-skelter race through it—if you want a new sensation.

Thank goodness, at length we reached higher ground, and yard after yard our progression became easier, till we reached the barren where all was tolerably plain sailing in comparison to what we had

gone through. A momentary halt was now called to recover wind and direction, as for some time back we had not heard Poteen's voice; but we were not long destined to be deprived of that favour, for again and again, with apparently renewed courage and vigour, he proclaimed that his game had not eluded him; but our exertions were not finished, another cedar swamp as bad as the first, but not so wide, had to be crossed; gallantly we did it, although leaving behind extravagantly large selvages as samples of the material my tailor had provided me with. Happy tailor to have a customer so interested in his success as to advertise his wares by leaving samples of them in such distant parts of the earth.

But at last Poteen, his mouth covered with blood and earth, joins us, for he came a few yards to meet us as if to return thanks for our coming to his assistance, then with renewed vigour he rushes among the neighbouring boulders, growls, scratches, seizes intervening and obstructing roots in his teeth, and behaves in a general way like a very brave dog.

With full-cocked gun, and ready for all emergencies, even to fight to the death, I examine the cavity that the dog is so busy upon; its size forbids the possibility of a bear ever having entered it, and all our search fails to disclose another. "Mysterious

certainly," thought I, while a sad and disappointed smile flitted over young Red-skin's face. Quietly he seized Poteen by the tail, and gave him a hoist out of the hole he was excavating (which his bedfellow did not choose to resent), then squatted and almost crawled out of sight headforemost, returning immediately afterwards to daylight with a porcupine by the hind leg.

I didn't say much, I was afraid to, for fear the bear might be near, and that he'd have the satisfaction of chuckling over our being sold. Well, Sugar killed that porcupine, not in the least out of spite, oh no! and Poteen was left ten minutes before the quills were picked out of his lips; this delay, I am under the impression, was not caused by forgetfulness. But if any one should see cruelty in the latter part of the preceding narrative, remember the disappointment.

It was our fault and not the dog's that the bear was not treed, for if we had stood still when Poteen first came up to Bruin, instead of alarming him by breaking through the brush so recklessly, he would never have thought of rushing away, but have gone to tree in the first convenient place. Again, the trail of a porcupine is so strong that not one dog in fifty can resist the temptation of pursuing them

whenever opportunity offers, deserting even the warmest scent of other game for the pleasure of a worry, although it is certain to result in a snout full of spines.

Dispirited, cold, and wet, we got home, the jauntiest of the party being Poteen, who carried his tail over his hurdies with a swirl, indicating that he laboured under the belief that he had distinguished himself, and that he was regarded by his master with eyes of unusual favour.

The Canadian porcupine, although not unlike his prototype of the old world, differs in many essential points, more especially in regard to the length of the spines, which never exceed three inches, and also in the size and power of its tail, which strikes right and left when its possessor is assailed, with force sufficient to cover with spines whatever soft substance it comes in collision with, and these being barbed, are exceedingly difficult to extract without breaking, when if such takes place severe pain and inflammation is certain to ensue to the recipient of the objectionable shafts.

Essentially a cave dweller, still, except in winter, they spend much of their time abroad wandering indolently in search of mast or berries, or climbing slowly to the highest limbs of trees that will support their weight, to obtain a favourite article of their

diet—buds, young leaves, or bark of the latest growth. An impression seems to prevail that they are incapable of activity ; but such is a mistake, for if so minded they can run with sufficient speed to outstrip the swiftest man.

By the Indians they are much prized as an article of food, and for their quills, which are used, after being stained various bright colours, to ornament the different curiosities the Red-man fabricates out of birch bark for disposal among the settlements.

Early in autumn this animal becomes loaded with fat, and a little later their rutting season commences. In spring the female produces, two being the number of her annual family, which must require as much, if not more, licking into shape than the young bears, for more ugly, uncouth little wretches, it has never been my luck to see.

Although the Canadian porcupine is a most harmless creature, still the animosity of nearly every animal that has sufficient strength is directed against it, the bear alone excepted, who invariably gives it a wide berth, and will even desert a favourite den whose sanctuary has been violated by the presence of the prickly intruder. To the wild-cat, lynx, and wolf he is a favourite prey ; but these marauders have been known to lose their lives from the spines they have had

stuck in them working their way into their brain or other vital parts. It is a strange circumstance that although dogs of European extraction suffer so severely in an attack upon these animals, the little Indian cur seldom or ever receives the slightest injury in such a rencontre.

But to revert to the bear. Sugar pronounced it a long-legged one; the reason of this being that the Indians recognise two distinct species of black bear, the short-legged or hog bear, and the long-legged. I am disposed to indorse this opinion, not from the difference of size and shape, as from their dissimilarity of character. The long-legged Bruin is a marauder, a flesh-eater by choice, sheep, hogs, and even young horned cattle being favourite articles of his diet; and, although he will generally avoid human beings, still if his temper has been ruffled, or his larder at low ebb, there is no saying, but just a possibility that he may force himself upon your acquaintance. At this season of the year a reason may be that they are prone to forget their good manners, for they have only lately returned to society after a long and protracted fast.

The settlers on the outskirts of civilisation know this to their cost, if they permit their calves and sheep to wander far from the homestead; for if mooin

comes across them he will not long hesitate to provide himself with an ample meal.

I am not fond of finikin little jobs, but unless I attend and assist in the canoe mending, I know that Master Red-skin will but indifferently perform his labour; for although he is willing enough when I am present, leave him half an hour to himself, and the charm of digging out a wood-chuck, or exhuming a ground squirrel are so attractive, that he appears unable to resist the temptation. After all, he is but a child, and with less faults than many of our civilised ones. Thus I found myself at work on the canoe, sewing up rents, putting in ribs, and ultimately plastering with gum every portion of the outer skin that exhibited a doubtful appearance. Before the sun set I had the satisfaction to learn that my labour was rewarded; for after paddling up and down the stream for half an hour her interior was as dry as a bone. So, please Providence, I shall try the trout to-morrow.

The next day broke gloomy and overcast, with rather a thick mist hanging on the surface of the water; this was scarcely promising, but by half-past nine the sun burst forth, and a gentle easterly wind sprung up, clearing off the fog as if by magic.

Commencing at the rapid above the shanty, I

fished down to where the canoe lay ready for launching, a distance of about a hundred and fifty yards, taking seven fine trout, averaging over two pounds each.

With my light tackle and rod they afforded me over an hour's splendid sport; and I was much indebted to Sugar for the skilful manner in which he handled the landing-net. All who are proficient with the fly-rod know how much depends upon your attendant in this department; and of all proficient I have met with, to this youth I yield the palm. Skill in all descriptions of field sports is inherent in the Indian; through successive generations they have cultivated it, their progenitors of hundreds of years ago believing, as their descendants do now, that to be a successful hunter is the acme of human accomplishments.

When about to step into the canoe the two Indian girls from Schubert Lake (for such Antoine said it was named) joined us. I thought that they had brought word from him, for he started in that direction, and had been gone now nearly three weeks, he having exhibited a *penchant* for the younger girl, who, although only sixteen, was a woman in size and form.

"Good day, Capen," chattered both, as they came out on the pebbly beach from the woods. "I hopes

you well, and have plenty good hunt, plenty everything," continued the duo.

"Thanks, thanks! have you seen Antoine?" I responded, addressing myself to the elder.

At this apparently innocent question, the long dark eyes of the girl seemed to dilate with suppressed emotion. Then drawing herself up to the extent of her height, a wonderful improvement to her previously indolent-looking figure, and tossing her head, with an air worthy of any Indian queen, she indignantly replied :

"Antoine, Antoine! what I care about him. He not warrior, he not chief, he not good hunter. Ask this squaw for him," pointing to her sister. "White man, like Antoine, no better than woman; he only paddle canoe, and cut the tree for Englishman" (alluding to his being a lumberman). "What I! I! child of chief's child no care about such sort;" and with additional indignation, "I bait wolf trap with such as him," looking with contempt upon her companion, whom I now learned, for the first time, was only her half-sister, and who appeared to cower under her indignant associate's angry glance.

A more perfect piece of acting I never saw. Madame Celeste as Naomi would have been nowhere by her side, although this embryo heroine was draped

in the ordinary, unattractive Indian costume of dirty blankets.

It was not difficult to see that this proud damsel was offended; for her bust heaved, the large tendons of her neck stood out swollen in relief, while her eye still retained the light of suppressed angry emotion.

Making some humbugging, meaningless excuse about not desiring to offend her—that she had entirely misunderstood me—I ordered Sugar to shove the canoe on shore and stepped out upon the beach. The younger girl willingly shook hands with me, the elder turning her side to my advances refused every overture I made for the re-establishment of good feeling.

At length the younger squaw produced from underneath her blanket a basket of swamp cranberries, a most acceptable addition to our cuisine, saying at the same time, “My present.”

Knowing well that the Indian never gives without expecting a return, I asked both to the shanty, where I had some trifling Brummagem trinkets laid in stock for such occasions. The donor of the gift followed me, but the elder stood obstinate and unrelenting, not even deigning to turn her eyes in the direction which we went.

After a trifling search—for what man without a

petticoat to look after his interests ever has his traps in order?—I turned out from the bottom of my valise a couple of rosaries of bright beads, the one having a green, the other an opaque blue cross attached. These I handed to Antoine's flame, telling her at the same time which was for her half-sister; and with these, supplemented by a small canister of coarse gunpowder as a present for her father, we took our way back to the landing-place.

On arriving there the petulant beauty had disappeared, the other girl all smiles and good nature, dashing off at a run into the woods after her recusant companion.

Before getting into the canoe, Sugar said, "Look there, Capen—there—on that sapling—don't you see?" And at last I discovered what he alluded to; a beautiful pair of moccasins, lined throughout with squirrel skin; left, as the boy said, doubtless repeating the words of the donor, "for the Capen, as he have no squaw to work for him."

This rencontre was certainly amusing, to say the least of it, and as I moralised while paddling up the stream on what the dark-skinned daughter of the forest would look like in crinoline, panier, and chignon, I came to the conclusion that the costume of Lady Godiva was far better suited to her graceful form.

Indian women when old are excessively ugly, their figures becoming bent and slouching, doubtless the result of the heavy loads they have to carry, for the brunt of transportation across portages, packing home game, and paddling the canoes falls upon them, and these restless people are ever changing their quarters. But among the young girls, who do little or nothing till mated, one will occasionally see a figure the perfection of human form, and with hands and feet, which for size and symmetry would outrival those of our best bred votary of fashion.

CHAPTER XI.

Two hours' fishing, commencing about a mile above the shanty, was rewarded with nearly two dozen trout, the largest being quite six pounds. My sport was excellent, and when a fish rose he meant it, gulping the fly down with such vigour, that you could actually hear the process. One of my captives, a fine deep made fellow that would have turned the scales at four pounds, missed the fly in his first break, from the circumstance that I was in the act of lifting the line from the water preparatory to making a fresh cast when he rose. In my second effort, however, I hooked him, not in the mouth, but in the flank near the vent. Fortune, however, favoured me, for the water was comparatively still, the river here being expanded to nearly double its usual breadth. Of course I lost much time before my attendant got him in the net ; but that was not to be grumbled at, for if

this little episode had occurred in a rapid, I must have smashed some of my tackle. For some time after getting fast to this fish, I was under the impression that he was a leviathan, for all the strain I dare put on the rod and line would not raise him an inch from the bottom where he kept circling round in the most clockwork like manner; but it is the last straw that breaks the camel's back, and the game golden-flanked beauty ultimately found that to his cost.

Several times while fishing I obtained a good view of a large otter; he doubtless was well aware of my vicinity, for he confined his marauding exploits to the pool above, where his exertions appeared to be indefatigable and most successful. This river really swarms with these destructive gentry, and the amount of havoc they commit amongst the fish must be enormous, for frequently I pick up trout of several pounds out of which only a couple of mouthfuls appear to have been taken, and that invariably from the same place, the thick of the back between the extremity of the skull and the first spine of the dorsal fin.

The colour of the trout in this river is remarkably beautiful, quite equal to those I have captured in the State of Maine; in form they are shorter and thicker in proportion to their length, and I am under the

impression, stronger and more active in consequence.

The various colourings, lights and shadows up this river (which here flows by compass from nearly due south to north), are most beautiful when the sun gets towards the horizon, and the perfect stillness that reigns around fairly entitle it to the soubriquet of the Lone River. It will be many years before the steps of civilisation reach here, for the soil is generally too stony for the agriculturalist to select, while lands without this objection, further to the south, where winter of course is less severe, are still waiting for occupiers.

Again, although the hillsides are clothed with an abundance of noble timber, the lumberman will long give this neighbourhood a wide berth, for without the assistance of dams they never could succeed in floating their logs down to the parent stream, which every stick of timber must reach ere it be convertible into money. But this immunity to the forest monarchs will not last for ever, for when the lordly pines have been cleared off from more accessible places, capital and labour will be brought into play, and ugly unsightly barriers will be erected, changing the rapid and eddying pool into sullen ponds and the summer haunt of the moose into a swamp.

Then the saw-mill will follow to awake the echoes

with its monotonous and incessant groaning at the constant labour expected from it by its hard task-master of an owner ; and the now clear pellucid water will bear upon its fair bosom tons of sawdust, poisoning with its resinous qualities every hole and reach of the river's course, till not a fish is left where thousands had previously existed.

Go on ! go on ! thou march of civilisation ; destroy all that is beautiful and pure in nature ; change the untrodden and uncontaminated wilds into a second Black district if you will, where the sons of toil are as unattractive as the country they labour and sweat in ; where human pig-styes are jumbled together in such numbers that the air stinks of them ; till the day come when the adage of " dog eat dog " be verified, from the superabundance of the human population upon earth.

On our course homewards numerous hooded mergansers (a very scarce bird in Europe) passed us, winging their way westward ; as many were alone, nesting has doubtless commenced in earnest. A beautiful bird in plumage, they are remarkably swift upon the wing, but totally unfit for food, except when killed in the flapper state, for the flesh afterwards becomes fishy and tough as fiddle-strings.

Paddling a canoe has this advantage over rowing,

you sit facing the direction in which you proceed, enabling you to see all that transpires in front. Thus Master Sugar, who was in the bow, called my attention to a rock near which we had to pass; on its surface was a large otter, and at his feet a dead trout of several pounds weight. This poacher I have often seen before, or one of his relatives, for the stone on which he rests is not more than three hundred yards above the shanty, and frequently to enjoy an out-door pipe I come thus far. Bending forward cautiously, I soon disengage my gun from its covering; but the loutre, as the boy calls it, is too wide awake by half, for long before we come within shooting distance, he has glided noiselessly under the surface of the water. It is utterly useless to fire long shots at these animals, for they are gifted with extraordinary vitality; the trap therefore is the only way to destroy them, for they are so exceedingly wary that it is but by the merest accident you can ever come within short range.

"Sugar, I'll give you half a cup of molasses if you catch that fellow," I said.

"I try very hard; suppose you lend me trap."

This I promised to do, and I am not without hope that ere long I shall see my copper-coloured companion dressing the otter's hide, for now the canoe is

afloat there is little difficulty in reaching this rock which appears to be his favourite resting-place.

Antoine's long absence begins to make me feel alarmed for his safety; not that he is much of a companion, and far from loquacious, unless when his tongue is caused to wag through the stimulating effects of a strong glass of whisky, when he becomes a new man and will jabber with the volubility of a French Canadian, which is surely saying enough, of the Yellowstone and Yosemite Valley, of the Apache and the Blackfoot Indians, of the Santa-Fé trail, and the Hudson Bay forts, but never a word about his future hopes and aspirations; no, that subject is sealed to him even when, as the Yankees say, he is as drunk as a biled owl. That he is arranging, if still alive—and he is not a likely man to meet an accident—some grand movement on the chess-board of his future life, I am perfectly certain. Nevertheless, with all his faults I miss his weather-beaten face and nervous unsteady eye.

As fishing will probably occupy my attention for some time to come, and as the prospects are that the take will be large, after a careful inspection of the neighbouring trees I discovered one which with a little labour could be converted into an admirable smoke-house, for by this process of curing I hope to

be able to save a large proportion of the trout which otherwise must certainly become lost. Although I can handle an axe fairly for an old countryman, still I am not a good chopper—far from it, and it is a description of labour that assorts worse than all others with my stiff drilled back; thus you may imagine I had no love for such work. Shirking my allotted job as long as I could, I finally became ashamed of myself, and set to impulsively and with a great deal more than the requisite vigour, as non-persevering people invariably do. First a stage had to be built about fourteen feet from the ground, so as to enable the tree to be cut off at the requisite height; it took the greater portion of a day to see this part of the labour satisfactorily performed. Sugar was the first to ascend the new structure, and with evident satisfaction, after tapping the stem around, informed me that the shell was thinner up there than at the base. Next day the youngster's words were verified, for a couple of hours' labour, about equally divided between us, laid the monarch of the woods upon mother earth, from whence it had probably taken hundreds of years to raise his once towering head. As this tree was perfectly dead, with fire and axe we soon cleared off the *débris* that surrounded the intended smoke-house, for the proximity of a brush-heap

would have formed a most acceptable hiding-place for any thieving denizen of the forest, who might possess covetous intentions towards our stores. Then an aperture in the side of the standing stump was made, sufficient for a man to enter, and cross pieces pegged against the interior for the rods to rest upon from which the fish hung. Each day we added to our store till the place was full, and Master Sugar disgusted, for to him I intrusted the interior management of this useful domestic adjunct, no very agreeable task, for he invariably returned from it as black as any London chimney-sweep.

Anticipating that some wandering Bruin might be attracted to the smoke-house by the pleasant odours that arose therefrom, I had both the door and roof closed with the heaviest materials that could be utilised for the purpose, for I had no desire, after all the trouble and time I had spent, to provide food with or without your leave, for strangers, let alone wild beasts.

Some days after the last-named job was over, I was sitting in the shanty enjoying my pipe, for I had been fishing in the morning, when Poteen and Skye raised such a hullabaloo that I left my sanctuary to see the cause of the disturbance. Of this I was not long kept in ignorance, for on the beach close

to where the canoe lay stood one of the largest moose I had previously ever seen. Almost with stolid indifference he regarded the dogs, only occasionally lifting a foot to kick or strike them, when they approached closer than he thought their presence desirable. Hoping the animal had not seen me I ran for my gun, but when I returned he had gone, doubtless having winded me, as the current of air though light was moving directly in the reverse direction to what would have been desirable. If there is anything in this world that can go through timber like a large bull moose, except an elephant, I am ignorant of its existence.

For several minutes I could hear the huge creature breaking through the dead-wood and undergrowth, his pace doubtlessly being accelerated by the sharp teeth of Poteen, who from the dash of colley blood he possesses never lost an opportunity of trying his tusks on the hind-legs of a retreating foe.

I was rather grieved at losing such a chance of replenishing my supplies, more particularly as what we could not use fresh would have been improved by a week in the smoke-house. Moreover, the brute's coat appeared in fine condition, the greater part of last year's hair having fallen being indicated by the darkness of its present colour.

The fresh antlers, too, were only half-developed, and as I wanted such a set of horns in the moss, to add to other trophies, I felt that I had made rather a bungle of the whole affair, which might so easily have been obviated by following a rule I had a thousand times formed mentally, viz., not to stir abroad when a clamour was raised by my four-footed companions, without taking my double-barrel with me.

CHAPTER XII.

MOSQUITOES, which made their appearance a few days since, are now becoming numerous, with an occasional black-fly added to their bloodthirsty phalanxes. I quite expect these pests to increase till they become unbearable, when I intend to shut up house, and start for the high grounds that lie a good hundred miles to the north, that is if any reliance can be placed on what Antoine and the principal hunter at Schubert Lake say.

Two days after having seen the moose, I was again aroused about noon by Poteen and Skye striving to outvie each other in their vocal powers. Pulling down my gun from its perch, I carefully left the house to take an observation, but instead of finding that game was the object of their wrath, I discovered that it was an Indian dog in the society of the dusky forest beauties. Onwards they came tripping, all radiant with smiles, and apparently in the very best

of humours, the elder sister not excepted, till near enough to salute me with the well-known term Capen, after which both held out their hands, with a certain amount of timidity attached to the movement, indicating that it was a mode of salutation unknown to their race until thrown into contact with the pale-faced intruders on their lands.

My visitors' names I never could remember, for in each there were about a dozen syllables, so I determined to re-christen them. On our way back to the shanty I ransacked my memory for suitable appellations. In my opinion white-swans, deer-foots, wild-ducks, blue-birds, and laughing-waters, had been done to death, so I settled upon Saucy for the elder and Fatty-plumpy for the junior. I explained to them in the best manner I could, much to the merriment of Master Sugar, who had just returned with a young owl that he had abducted from its parents, that from some inexplorable formation in an Englishman's jaw, he was unable to string a quantity of syllables together like Wa-ha-sa-bunk-a-suck, &c., and that in future if they honoured me with their presence, they should be known to the reader's humble servant by the names I have already mentioned. I was scarcely prepared to be questioned upon what their respective new appellations meant;

but when I found this was the first query each made, well—then I had to make a virtue of necessity, and go through a piece of acting, a thing I never could do in my life to the satisfaction of an English audience, although several times attempted; however, I had a hope that these primitive children of the lone land would not be such fastidious critics as their civilised sisters.

Rising from my seat, for we had entered the shanty, I pointed to the elder. Putting emphasis on the word Saucy, I said, "Saucy means," and then found myself at a full stop. "Confound it," thought I to myself, "brace yourself together, an old stager like you to be nonplussed in this way is absurd. Come, go in for the acting. Your critics have never seen Vestris, Mrs. Stirling, or Agnes Robertson, and therefore it is out of their power to make comparisons which are odious." "True, oh king!" I responded to my argument (of course *sotto voce*), and with additional force I pronounced the word "Saucy." Grave and earnest remained my audience. This was reassuring—a titter would have done for me. Then I went through, mind you, without discredit to myself, the most difficult of any one to please, all the charming, attractive, impudent, yet nice ways of a petulant, saucy girl. I didn't do

it by halves when once I was started, but entered into the spirit of the thing. At one moment I pretended with my left to take the right hand, then either affectedly drew it away, or smacked the objectionable paw for its attempted presumption; then I assumed a countenance as if some one was speaking to me, and sharply turned my back as if I desired no further converse with them; finally winding up with several stamps of my feet, at the same time assuming the most indignant expression of countenance I could muster for the occasion, beckoning with both my hands as if to repel the nearer approach of some invisible stranger.

Would you believe it, although a knowledge of the *claque* has not yet reached this neighbourhood, I received by look and gesture immense approbation, so subsided into a seat and rested complacently upon my well-earned laurels.

Fatty-plumpy and Sugar chaffed Saucy immensely, yet the proud Indian girl took it all in good part, and joined in the merriment with as much gusto as the others.

After a fair allowance of time for the effects of my previous eloquence to pass off, I again rose to my legs, when my audience became such attentive listeners, that their gravity was almost fatal to my

equanimity. "Oh, what an example!" I hear he who struts the mimic stage exclaim, if one of such should ever read this book ; but I doubt it much, for I never met a knight of the sock and buskin either in the hunting-field, among the heather, or in the golden stubbles, so as a class I fear they are not lovers of rural life, so scarcely likely to see this. Well, to the younger sister, looking steadily in the girl's face, I said, "Fatty-plumpy means this;" I blew my cheeks out, stuck a representative of a pillow inside my coat, and waddled up and down the limited space that was unoccupied. Again the audience were convulsed, and I, satisfied with my efforts, again took my seat, causing my countenance to assume more than the usual severity of expression ; for far from it was my desire to allow my hearers to imagine that a great mind like mine could be in the slightest degree affected by such frivolities. However, I found it hard to keep my gravity, so I braced myself till I looked like adamant, if such an expression is correct, for although I have heard the simile I do not remember ever to have seen the article. And when the strain upon my muscles required relaxing, I lit a pipe ; for when expelling smoke from your mouth or nostrils any contortion of features is supposed to be necessary to attain the end desired.

For some minutes complete silence reigned among

my guests, when the elder sister rose, and advancing towards me displayed upon her neck the cross that I had sent by her sister, the younger one immediately following suit; and I had the gratification of knowing from the position where the baubles rested, that their recipients highly valued my trumpery gifts.

As I could not give away my gewgaws every day, and they had doubtless an abundance at home of fish and venison, I ransacked my brain to find out what I could offer my guests. Sugar's love of molasses at once struck me as a probable weakness of the young ladies; so I poured upon three birch-bark plates about a table-spoonful and handed the delicacy to each. Their enjoyment of it was truly delightful and refreshing to look at, but not having finger-glasses and table-napkins to place at their service, their physiognomies afterwards, although a little less so from the colour that nature had given them, reminded me of a tiddy-widdy, darling little duck-a-daisy, that a would-be successful candidate for a seat in Parliament must kiss, or for ever after lose the goodwill of a doating mother, and through her an affectionate father's vote.

As the afternoon was advancing and the day promised sport, I determined to go up the river a mile or so and fish home. My guests accompanied me to the canoe, but instead of bidding adieu when we em-

barked, Saucy proposed my expelling Sugar, and taking his place : so pleased was the youngster that he got out into the water without asking permission, as if my acceptance was a matter of course. In a few moments I had him seated again, when I assured the ladies that I preferred at present paddling my own canoe. Still something appeared to be on their minds which they wished to say, for no movement did they make to indicate their intention to depart. Saucy, however, broke the ice.

“You got no squaw ; me be your squaw.”

“And me,” said Fatty-plumpy.

It never rains but it pours ; two wives offered a *lone* man in the space of a minute ; there must be some deep, deep design underneath all this impenetrable to my opaque brain, so I declined their offers with thanks, protesting that so serious a matter would require time for consideration, at the same time I thought it advisable to remind Fatty-plumpy that Antoine was her admirer, at which she snapped her fingers, and with more energy than grace exclaimed, “That for Antoine.”

I think, gentle reader, you will pardon me if I confess that I began to imagine that I must be a deuced good-looking fellow, or the two belles of the neighbourhood would not be in love with me at the

same time, and not only that, share my caresses between them ; but all this speculation was ruthlessly dispelled by Fatty-plumpy exclaiming, licking her already well-daubed lips :

“When you take time, Capen, and I your squaw, you give me molasses every day.”

“Good-bye girls, be virtuous and you will be happy,” I pathetically loudly but rather hurriedly exclaimed, at the same time shaking my hand as if waving a fond adieu, while I muttered *sotto voce* to Sugar :

“Dip your paddle deep you yellow-skinned young scoundrel, and get me out of this neighbourhood as soon as possible.”

The last I saw of the belles, they were young lady-like, one arm around the waist of the other, sauntering off into the woods. Would such a manner have been assumed if either had been jealous of the other? Impossible, I mentally ejaculated. Is there not food here for thought? For among all the young ladies I have had the fortune to be acquainted with, I cannot name one who would be so self-denying as to share her husband with another, *au contraire* resent his paying even a sister more than the most commonplace courtesy. Is jealousy, then, the result of education? The subject is worthy the consideration of the School Board.

The shock that my nervous system had suffered was rather too much for me, consequently I felt rather out of sorts, and without the ardour and enthusiasm necessary to enjoy my fishing ; ultimately I lost my casting-line, finally broke the tip of my rod, so I desisted from further efforts against the trout, considering I had gone through enough that day for one man.

That evening I hurriedly ate my meal and looked forward to a long and sound night's rest, but everything appeared determined to oppose my desire. First my favourite pipe took a fit of obstinacy and would not draw ; that having been rectified so as to put it out of its power to repeat such objectionable conduct, it refused to burn the tobacco evenly, and permitted the ash and essential oil to pass into my mouth by wholesale. In disgust I immediately selected another to fulfil its office, and the new broom happily swept clean ; then Sugar would chatter, so I snubbed the boy, and he in consequence pouted, and I felt disgusted with myself at my heartless conduct. "I have it," thought I ; "I am about to have my old complaint, fever and ague." So I forthwith mixed a very strong and hot mug of whisky-punch. I felt an improvement after it had been drunk, so I turned into my crib without delay, and was soon in

the land of dreams, playing the character of pasha of an unlimited number of tails with a harem around me that formed a perfect galaxy of beauty—when how-wow went Skye, and Poteen joined in with all the power his lungs would afford him.

It was no use trying to silence them, calling them by rotation good dogs or shying whatever I could lay my hand upon would not pacify the wretches, so most unwillingly I got up, my movement being forestalled by Sugar, who was endeavouring to obtain a light from the smouldering embers that faintly indicated where the fire had existed.

“What the deuce is it?” I asked.

“Me think bear at the smoke-house; I hear log tumble off it.”

So slipping on such garments as were necessary, I was prepared to sally forth, gun in hand, followed by the boy armed with a second, and who had received instructions to place it in my hands if I failed to give the aggressor his quietus with two barrels.

No sooner was the door open, than after their manner both dogs rushed frantically off, and in a few seconds afterwards there was such a row as woke up the most distant echoes, as well as every owl who was within miles. There was no mistaking this time; something was at the smoke-house that had no right in its

vicinity; whatever it was I knew it was receiving a sharp reception, for the intonation of Skye's voice, and of Poteen's also, he having gained pluck by the little one's example, plainly told that they were playing no game of romps.

The night, although no moon was up, still was brilliant with the light of innumerable stars, and thus eminently suited for the task before us. As we approached the smoke-house the din of battle seemed to recede from it, obvious indication that the thief was attempting to make off, so I hallooed to the dogs to encourage them, and in response to my voice theirs increased in anger. A kind of intuitive fear seemed to steal over me that Skye would get mauled, for I now had no longer doubt but that it was a bear, and I knew the little fellow's foolhardy pluck would induce him to run into the very jaws of death, so I ran, almost flew, over logs, through brush, till I was within a few yards of the combatants.

"There he is, Cap," called Sugar; "don't you see? —there—there."

And at last I did see Master Bruin ascending a tree, good six feet off the ground, and rapidly increasing his distance from the earth, with Skye hanging to his rump, and Poteen no way backwards, snapping at the enemy as long as he remained within reach. The

position and the shadows were such that I could not shoot with precision, and I dreaded only to wound the creature for the sake of my dogs. One thing certain, he was an enormous fellow, and now that he was in my power I was determined to have him.

Thirteen or fourteen feet from the ground a branch projected from the parent stem; on reaching this the bear shifted his position, as if to take stock of the enemy, and my little favourite let go his hold and dropped to the ground apparently none the worse for his exertions.

Bruin evidently did not like our looks, so he resolved to place more distance between himself and his enemies, so recommenced his ascent. What between the uncertainty of the light, the heavy shadows and the foliage overhead, move as I would, I could not get a clean shot. So I sent Sugar to the shanty for my ground rug, blanket, pipe and tobacco, for I determined to delay the battle till daylight, unless forced upon me earlier.

In a quarter of an hour the boy was back, ten minutes more his skilful hands had lit a fire, and we sat down to watch that the foe did not steal a march upon us.

Several times I caught myself dozing, but when I pulled myself together I could see the young Indian's

snake-like eyes firmly fixed upon a dark mass in the overhead foliage, while the two dogs sat restlessly by the fire, leaving every few moments its grateful light and heat, to prevent the misappropriator of their master's goods from escaping his due reward.

A fire in the dense forest at midnight is a peculiar and impressive scene; one to be remembered if once witnessed, not to be imagined if never seen. To do it justice by description is impossible, for as varied as are the forms of the dancing blaze, as numerous are the weird shadows that flit around whenever the light becomes uncertain.

Time, like many other things, is obstinate, and lags on the way when supplicated to hasten its flight. On this occasion it behaved even worse than usual. At length I knew daybreak was near, for the owls commenced in loud voice to lament that their nocturnal forays were near an end for that night.

From far, far away, floated a weird-like yell, which even distance had not mellowed. I looked inquiringly to Sugar for information. "That," said he, "is the lucifee" (*anglicè*, bay lynx). I should not have required to ask the question, for many a time it has made my heart's blood run cold by the suddenness with which this animal would give vent to its unearthly voice.

"I suspect mooin like very much to come down. See, Capen, he going to try;" and sure enough there was every indication that such was the bear's intention.

"I wish the brute would remain where he is half an hour longer," I exclaimed.

"So he will," said my companion, "if you not like shoot yet." On which he pulled a brand from the fire and rattled it against the trunk of the tree, and sure enough mooin settled down in his original position.

So inherent is a knowledge of the habits of wild animals in the Red-man, that even their children know intuitively what it is necessary to do in their pursuit to obtain any desired result. The white man who spends a life in the wilderness, may be able to kill more game than an Indian hunter, but it is because he is invariably better armed, and always superior as a shot; but try which can, undetected, approach closest to a cariboo or moose, or follow them when wounded through the intricacies of a hemlock or cedar swamp, and the snake-visioned aborigine will be so immeasurably superior as to make comparison absurd.

Slowly at first, but with increasing rapidity, the night gives way to day. Bruin's position and atti-

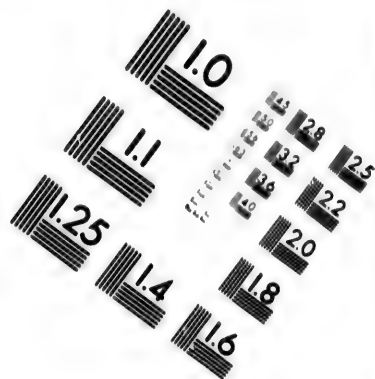
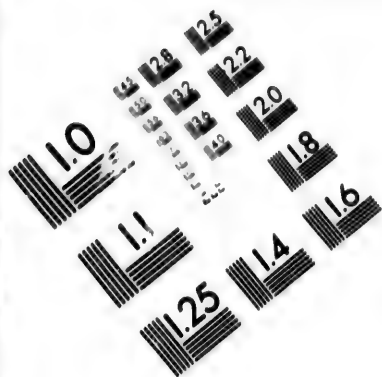
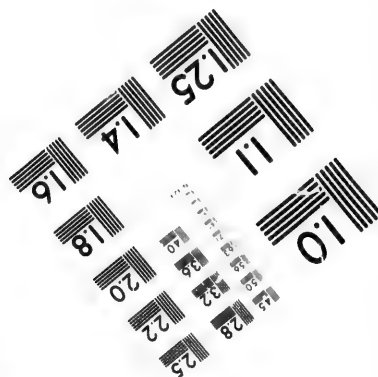
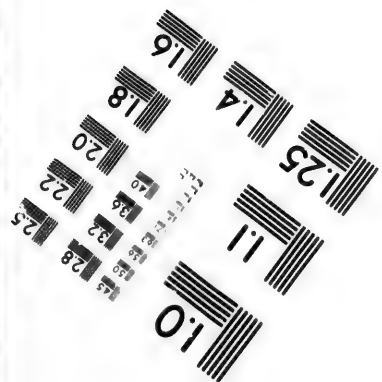
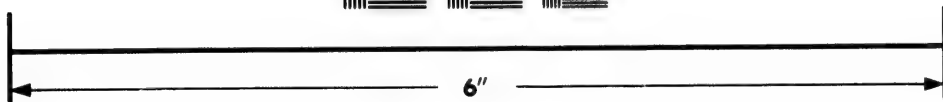
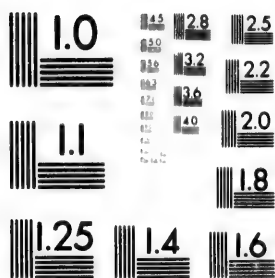


IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (MT-3)



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tude can be clearly defined; fresh charges are placed in each barrel, so as to insure against a hang or misfire, and I raise my large gun to my shoulder, take a steady but not protracted aim, and as the trigger is pressed the bear falls forward, slides down a few feet, clings for a moment, and then falls to the earth with a heavy thud. Both dogs in a moment are upon him; but as I feared, their temerity cost them dearly, for Poteen received a blow which knocked him off his legs, and caused him to sing out most lustily.

A second shot I fire into the enraged brute at a distance of seven or eight yards; but instead of incapacitating the bear from further exertion, it seems to imbue him with additional ferocity. On me his hate is now centred; the lad shoves the second gun into my hand, and the plucky boy has done it none too soon, for already my foe has risen on his hind legs to grasp me; but my ball this time does its work, entering the head under the chin close to its junction with the neck, and Bruin rolls over backwards, belching forth mouthfuls of his heart's blood. The strife is over, and I the winner; but after all with little to boast of, although much to be thankful for, for if Sugar's heart had failed him, or my last shot had not been so well placed—

well, I should doubtless have received an embrace more earnest than affectionate.

My trophy I should deem was quite four hundred pounds weight, although far from fat; extremely old, judging from his teeth and claws, and quite a veteran, if an opinion could be formed from the numerous scars upon his head and neck.

The hide was far from being in good order, nevertheless sufficiently serviceable to make an excellent rug, if such should be required in the following winter.

After an unusual amount of excitement there is sure to be a reaction, and I believe all the coterie, dogs included, and even myself, felt little inclined for more exercise that day; so the hours fled in that lethargic, unmarked manner that causes one to look back with astonishment upon the passage of time, and wonder how on earth it can be so late, for late it certainly is, when I find the sun is scarcely an hour high above the western forest line.

As my rod was together, and casting-line attached, I picked it up and sauntered off to the throat of the pool. The second or third cast I rose and hooked a very lively fish about four pounds, which took at least ten minutes to land. A few more throws convinced me that the trout were unusually "well on

the feed," so I went up stream several hundred yards, so as to leave the pool at the shanty door undisturbed, for it was a wonderful handy little preserve if a few fresh fish were wanted for a meal.

Two flies on my leader I found more than requisite, so I took off my dropper, retaining for trail what is familiarly known throughout Canada as the Montreal fly; its principal colour is grey, slightly ornamented with a few strands of scarlet ibis feather, and will generally be found very killing upon all Dominion waters early in the season.

An advantage that North American trout-fishing possesses over British, is that much larger hooks are used, and thus much easier to be traced correctly by the eye in their passage through the water.

A more lovely sunset than occurred on that evening, I cannot but once recall. On the occasion I allude to I had rested on the southern shores of Lake Ontario after a long and successful day's fishing, and when the sun dropped behind the placid pure waters of the lake, the heavens were illuminated to the zenith with the most brilliant vermilion clouds; to-night it was nearly the same, and the light after old Sol had hid his face looked softened and coloured as if it had passed through a gigantic window of Bohemian glass.

There was but one drawback to the pleasure the observer can revel in if he loves nature seen to such advantage, viz., the black-flies and mosquitoes, which are commencing to be troublesome. However, the former disappear when the chill of the night air commences to be felt, the latter on the contrary seem to regard the additional cold as a stimulant to their appetite.

When the shadows had increased to such a length as to blend into one undefined dark mass, I heard a sound proceeding from a clump of spruce-trees in my rear with which my ear was very familiar, but so far I had been unable to discover what bird or quadruped produced it. The sound is a peculiar whine, which might with a little stretch of imagination be taken for that of a puppy. Leaving my rod stuck upright in the soil, I slowly stole into the bush and stalked towards the place from whence I thought the unknown notes issued. Almost arriving at my destination a couple of Tewgmalm's owls took flight and crossed the river. Still doubting that they could be the origin of the strange call, I had the uncertainty dispelled by soon hearing the whining voice proceed from their new resting-place. At this season of the year the numerous species of *Strigidae* are incessantly engaged from sunset to daybreak hunting for their

favourite prey in the darkest and most dismal parts of the forest ; even hares are not too large to escape their attention, but on emergency they can put up with moles, mice, and even frogs for their diet.

One of the most destructive of this numerous family is the Virginian or eagle-owl, whose courage is quite equal to its strength—for I doubt if there is anything from a cat downwards that it will not assault, and so extraordinary is the power of its claws, that woe even to grimalkin if they are fastened on his back.

Their call notes, for they have two, are impressive, not easily forgotten, but far from agreeable, one resembling the yelling of a maniac in the throes of his agony. Many a time when on the trail after the path had become indistinct from the sombre gloom of the dense foliage overhead, I have been startled, almost my blood made run cold, by this fiendish maniacal yell suddenly bursting on my ear.

CHAPTER XIII.

ANTOINE, my French Canadian, not having returned, I begin to fear that he must have got into trouble, or found new companions; although sometimes sceptical on the sincerity of his protestations of friendship, still his appearance about the shanty makes the place much less solitary. Moreover, at night, whether he has been spending the day fishing, shooting, or trapping, he has something to narrate in reference to his success or day's adventures.

Another advantage that his presence afforded was, that in half an hour he could cut up as much firewood as it took Sugar or myself double the time to accomplish, and the consumption of that useful article far advanced in the season as we now are, is not inconsiderable. However, I must remain satisfied till I go to Schudic Lake, for it is more than probable

that some of the Indians there will be able to give me information of his whereabouts.

I had been employed all the morning fly-tying, as I wish to be provided with a good stock before starting for the ridges, and every day seems to increase the duties to be attended to, and is likely to do so up to the date of our departure.

Shortly before commencing to cook our mid-day meal, the Indian boy, who had returned from the river with a bucket of water, informed me that Poteen, who always followed the lad as a shadow, "had been nearly eat up by biggestest of wolves." However, the dog looked all right, although certainly his countenance indicated that he had been alarmed. On questioning my attendant I found that a wolf had made a dash from the cover near the boat-house at Poteen, and but for the lad seizing a stick and rushing to the rescue, I should have probably lost his valuable services. Taking down my gun I went out with the hope of obtaining a shot, and although I searched all the most likely places in the vicinity I could not catch a view of the marauder. I was much annoyed at this visit, for I felt convinced it would not be the last, and that probably my pet Skye would be picked up by the grey scoundrel and carried off before I should have a chance to interfere, for it is a

most extraordinary thing that a wolf seems to prefer a dog to all other prey, even excepting young pig. As the canoe required some caulking I devoted the afternoon to that purpose. My gun I did not hesitate to take with me, as Skye was my companion, and I felt doubtful whether the visitor of the morning was not lurking somewhere in the neighbourhood.

I had almost completed my labour when my favourite became uneasy, every few minutes advancing towards the bushes, barking for an instant vehemently, and then returning to my side. Pretending to continue intensely occupied, I kept my eyes fixed upon the suspicious locality, having shifted my position so as to be able to lay my hands on my double-barrel at the shortest possible notice. However, I could discern nothing, but this did not reassure me, for too well was I aware of the stealthy nature of the animal I supposed was concealed close by.

I thought and thought, still I could devise no means that promised the desired object of making him show himself, so I resolved gun in hand to make a rush with the hope that the rapidity of my movement would take the intruder by surprise, and thus give me an opportunity to get a shot at him as he sneaked off. I waited for a few minutes; Skye, who

had advanced again towards the suspicious neighbourhood, still barking with more hurry and greater indications of fear than heretofore, rushed hurriedly back to my side. Now or never I mentally exclaimed, and dashed into the brush ; once in it the undergrowth was not so close, and from this circumstance I got a good view of the skulker. Bang, bang went both barrels as quick as thought, and the object of my aim lay struggling in the dust—both barrels had been fired at a range of less than twenty-five yards, and the heavy shot they contained had done fearful execution. The position that the animal was in when first covered, caused him to get the charge fore and aft, which resulted in the hair and hide being much destroyed.

This was one of the largest wolves I have ever seen, the true grey timber breed, and very closely allied to the north of Europe representative of the race. From the very worn and decayed state of his teeth I should imagine he was quite a veteran in years, and his plump well-fed carcase plainly said he had been living on the fat of the land. At this season of the year, from the quantity of birds and animals that are breeding, I expect they have little difficulty in obtaining food, but the destruction of life to satisfy the wants of an animal gifted with so insatiable an appetite must be enormous.

My success on this occasion was most satisfactory, for after becoming aware of this wolf's visit I never would have left home without feeling uneasy that one of the dogs would be carried off in my absence.

Sugar's delight knew no bounds, and never previously did I see a carcase more rapidly skinned than this one under his skilful hands. A curious circumstance and worthy of mention is that two porcupine's quills were discovered in the wolf, one buried over an inch in the muscles of the neck, the other nearly as far, but running longitudinally in the cheek. After all my boy's exertions the hide was not worth the trouble bestowed upon it, for it was sadly deficient of hair and tremendously riddled with the shot, so both it and the carcase were taken into the rapids and committed to their safe keeping.

The latitude up here is too high for many different families of snakes to be found; but there is one species very abundant, whose thick form and sluggish appearance indicate that at least he is well-fed. In more than colour and proportions it resembles the water viper; in fact if it was not that this reptile is not venomous, I should pronounce them to be the same. In length they are from four to five feet, of a dark chocolate colour, large in the head, and do not terminate in a fine-pointed tail. In wet grass land on the margin of water they are most

numerous, in fact, so much so that a dozen may be seen in the course of an hour. I am sure the poor frogs that live in this vicinity must pass an anxious time, for I suppose they are their principal food, at the same time it appears impossible that this sluggish reptile can capture one of them otherwise than by surprise. Sugar, who is devoted to bait-fishing, and looks with eyes of contempt on my artificial flies, which he calls "a mosquito fixing," seldom returns after spending some hours at his favourite amusement without announcing the intelligence that "he catchee one darn'd big snake." As his bait is invariably a shiner, a beautiful bright little fish like a dace, it is evident that these reptiles have a penchant for fish; but their velocity should prevent them often becoming victims.

These remarks were induced from my having visited the marsh that I have previously spoken of, to see if snipe were still abundant. Such is not the case, the preponderating number doubtless having proceeded further northward to breed, those that remain being similarly engaged. After a great deal of searching I discovered a nest with only two eggs in it; these I removed to make some notes upon, that I may be able at a future date to find out if they and those of our English snipe exactly agree.

The wild-duck's nest discovered on my last visit, I found deserted. From portions of broken shell scattered around the vicinity, I have little doubt but that the fond mother succeeded in hatching her brood, and probably now is secreted with her progeny in some of the neighbouring beds of rushes.

June 10.—This afternoon the flies are fearfully troublesome; not for a moment would they give me rest; the result is that both my hands and face are swollen excessively, causing me to suffer intense irritation. I can put up with a great deal of inconvenience, fatigue, and annoyance, but the persecution of these wretches makes me irritable and discontented.

An hour before sunset I visited the river; the fourth or fifth cast I made rose a large fish, which I hooked. This trout was wonderfully strong and active, thus requiring all my attention. I believe the black-flies and mosquitoes are aware of the helplessness of my position when fast to a large fish, for they surround me in clouds, and feed upon every exposed portion of my person. At such a time to smack your face you dare not, or your rod, or line, or both would be smashed, so I submitted, but not with a good grace, to be eaten alive. I doubt if Job would. If one could discover a means of annihilating these two

bloodthirsty races, what a benefactor he would be to the human family.

Arriving at the shanty, (Master Sugar I found busy, the two dogs watching his labour. On a log which was hewn smooth, and was invariably used for the purpose, he had a large otter stretched, and almost completely skinned. "Him worth five dollar!" he exclaimed, when I reached his side. It was the one I pointed out to the boy some weeks since in the pool above our residence; at least there he had caught it.

At length the flies have become such perfect plagues that I have determined to start for the upland barrens as soon as I can put my home in order, for I have resolved to take Master Sugar with me, although originally I had intended leaving him behind in charge of my property; but the boy looked so downcast, so thoroughly prostrated at the mention of a separation that my heart relented, it having suddenly occurred to me that possibly he suffered as much as myself from the summer pests of the woodlands. Before informing him that I had changed my plans he hazarded in a half-timid inquiring manner the question whether the dogs would be left behind. On answering in the negative, I observed one of those peculiar pouts steal over his face, which ge-

nerally in white children precede tears, doubtless the thoughts of parting with his bedfellow and boon companion Poteen, had no small portion in the cause of the show of so much emotion.

In the State of Maine, and on the edges of the provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, I have found the mosquitoes and black-flies so numerous as to believe that a few more would render them beyond the endurance of human nature; but it is surprising what human beings can put up with when compelled, for in my present abode, the air, the ground, the bushes seem to have no other employment but to produce and reproduce them in countless myriads. Besides the two pests above-mentioned, there are three more, the diminutive sand-fly, the breeze-fly, and the moose-fly; the first is so small, that even while you feel the pain of his bite on the back of the hand, it takes close examination to discover its exact situation. It seems to sink into a pore of the skin, and the sensation it imparts to the sufferer is such as might be imagined to result from being touched with the point of a red-hot needle. The two others, although far from unwilling to pay the wanderer their delicate attentions, are much easier avoided from their size.

For the last few days I have lived in an atmo-

sphere of smoke to endeavour to persuade the persecutors to retire, and my skin in consequence feels like that of a mummy; but all is of no avail, smudges of damp wood smouldering in-doors, out-doors, and in every available place, fail to have the desired effect. So after resisting for ever so long (much against my will, for the process is so dirty) I am compelled to smear my face, neck, and hands with oil of tar. For an hour or two after undergoing this process you have comparative rest, but the moment the perspiration commences to remove it, then the patient must undergo a fresh dressing with this filthy unguent. Friends of mine have frequently, and with the greatest confidence, recommended camphor and penny-royal, as a recipe certain to protect the sportsman; both I have given a fair trial, and can only say, Bosh!

One thing I have found thoroughly efficacious in the house to expel these minute pests, but it cannot be obtained except by those who have made a lengthened sojourn in the woods, viz., the giant fungus stripped from the tree stems, and dried in the sun till perfectly free from the smallest particle of damp; this is a very long process, and no other mode of drying will secure the desired result. The fungus then having been properly cured, place a piece as

big as an apple on the floor in the middle of your apartment; after having set it on fire, it will smoulder for hours, emitting rather a pungent smoke, unpleasant possibly to human beings, but infinitely preferable to the society of the insatiable bloodsuckers.

When travelling in China, I was frequently annoyed by mosquitoes, more especially if our resting-place was in the vicinity of a canal or paddy-fields; but when such was the case, the coolies would purchase from the nearest shop a substance that smouldered like a joss-stick, and which would not be lighted over a few minutes before every insect had fled.

Nor are the attacks of these pests of the American woodlands confined to man; my poor dogs suffered more, I believe, than myself. Scarcely a minute's rest did the unfortunate creatures obtain during day or night, so that from constant worry and want of sleep they became attenuated and low-spirited, while their coats stared and their eyes became bleared, indications that invariably precede hydrophobia.

So much do the moose and cariboo endure at this season of the year from the same pests, that they spend the greater portion of the twenty-four hours in the water, with only the upper portion of the head above the surface. The bears are also not exempt

from this persecution ; in fact, one day I heard one of these animals moaning in that mumbling manner with which they appear to denote both pleasure and pain. An Indian hunter was with me at the time ; inquiring from him what was the cause, his response was :

“ Guess the flies after moonin.”

That some persons get callous to their attacks, I have no doubt, from the following incident : I was shooting ruffed grouse in a thick birch cover in the State of Maine. Although birds were abundant the flies caused me to desist. On reaching the edge of a clearing I perceived a farmer engaged in the interesting and amusing occupation of picking stones off his land. After saluting the husbandman, I remarked that the flies were fearfully bad to-day (around both his head and mine hovered thousands). “ Well, there are a few,” was his response, and immediately he reverted to his occupation as unconcerned as possible, although I would dare to bet that there were a hundred at that moment feeding upon his face, neck, and hands.

Wonderful, certainly, are the ways of Providence, for how could this unfortunate being have cultivated his five acres of stone-covered, impoverished soil if he had suffered from the attacks of mosquitoes and black-flies, as does your humble servant ? With the

evil I should not neglect to mention the good. When the sun goes down all the black-flies disappear, their absence lasting throughout the night; not so with the mosquitoes, they revel in darkness, and their appetites, ever excellent, during the hours we devote to rest appear increased.

Another instance of the voracity and numbers of these insect pests I will mention. I have seen a brown cow turned literally black by the countless thousands of black-flies that adhered to her body, and the gratitude the poor thing would evince if a piece of damp decayed wood was lit for her to stand over, was most touching.

CHAPTER XIV.

As it is settled that Sugar accompanies me, it is necessary that a hiding-place should be found for our surplus property, for we must start for the high grounds in the lightest of marching order. This was no very difficult matter if man's inquisitive prying propensities had alone to be dreaded, for here our race are very few and far between; but all the wild animals are imbued with so much curiosity, and with it destructiveness, that it becomes a difficult matter to guard against them. About a hundred yards from the river and nearly half a mile from the shanty was a very small cave, about the size of a subaltern's barrack-room at Chatham, or an officer's cabin in a government troop-ship. Around its entrance were scattered several blocks of granite, which with hand-spikes could be rolled so as to entirely close the entrance. After due consideration I decided that it

would suit my purpose; so the boy was sent up to clear it out. A flitting, as it is termed in Scotland, is never an agreeable affair, and it is extraordinary how one's property accumulates, for it took nearly an entire day transporting skins, fish, &c., to the storehouse. At length our labour was at an end, and, oh, how miserable our little home looked when we returned at evening to spend our last night within its walls. I was late in going to bed, and as I sat thinking of the past, home, companions, and foreign and far distant scenes I had visited, the logs, seats, and tables seemed to chide me for my desertion, even the wind appeared to sing a requiem of condolence with my dumb reprovers.

Day broke clear and bright, the stream merrily laughed as it danced over the rapids. A cedar-bird sung his sweet plaintive song from the topmost bough of our favourite shade tree, a hemlock spruce, and the restless blue jays and woodpeckers were busier and more loquacious than was their wont, as we launched our canoe from under the guardian branches of the graceful silver birch that formed our boat-house. Our baggage was light, so the craft was soon loaded. Sugar, Skye, and Poteen by instinct found their respective places; quietly I stepped into the stern, and with a shove of my paddle we were forced out into the

eddying river and our fragile craft danced along with the rushing current. As we doubled the point that shut out the last view of our late home, we bid it a loud but fond adieu, then dipping our paddles deep rushed into the rapids, and bounded on over the surging water that fretted itself to foam over the jagged rock obstructions that barred its course.

Schudic Lake was our destination. The Indian encampment on its margin was about ten miles from the shanty by land, twenty by water, but so great was the velocity of the current that the time necessary to reach it by either route was about the same. There I wished to leave my canoe for safe keeping, as well as endeavour to obtain among these, my nearest neighbours, a guide for the unknown regions I was about to explore. When we had passed the familiar scenes that we encountered almost daily, and where the navigation was thoroughly known, Sugar, whose duty it was to keep a sharp look-out for snags, rocks, and invisible dangers, relapsed into perfect silence—even our four-footed companions seemed oppressed with serious thoughts. With such a surrounding very out of place would have been trivial conversation, for on every side was room for wonder and admiration of the works of the Creator of the Universe. Above a clear blue

sky, beneath an emerald transparent water, on either hand rocks or gravelly bays, margined by the finest timber that nature with her bounteous hand could grow. The pine, autocrat of the forest, shuts out the distance; the balsam and spruce, no less beautiful, but of smaller stature, try to rival in height their giant brother, while the birch and maple with feathery branches dip with gentle touch the gliding water, and contrast with wonderful harmony their light-green foliage against the sombre colouring of the darker timber. The pines, the balsams, and the spruces have all the stern grandeur of the male, the birch and maple the soft attractive dalliance of the female. On our way we flush numerous wild-fowl, but my gun reposes in its cover, for I feel disinclined to mar the harmony that here exists, either by blood-shedding or disturbing the latent echoes.

Not dreaming, for sharp eye and a quick hand were in constant requisition, but pondering, thinking, we shot round a point, leaving the rapid and entering a placid, quiet pool. Our sudden appearance was so unexpected that a bull moose who was floating with completely submerged body, gazed at us with wondering eyes for several moments, ere it appeared to flash across his brain that the neighbourhood of the new comers was dangerous in the extreme to his safety. With a

lunge forward like a rearing horse he struck bottom with his hind-feet. A repetition of the action took him into shallow water, when shaking the spray from his glossy dark hide he rapidly trotted off into the friendly shelter of the neighbouring wood. Ample time was afforded me to have killed this deer, but not being short of provisions I let him go, much to the chagrin of my red-skinned companion.

In alluding to this animal, I say trotted off: other representatives of the genus would have galloped, or more correctly speaking, bounded away; but in all my experience I have never seen the moose do so. Their gait is a trot, and a wonderfully swift one when pressed; but I do not think, from physical formation, that they can gallop.

Only one authority that I know of notices this peculiarity, Captain Hardy, of the Royal Artillery, and in a foreign periodical devoted to natural history, I see he is taken severely to task for the assertion—and most unjustly so I think.

Without further hap or adventure we reached Schudic Lake. From the entrance of the river into it to the Indian encampment was only a couple of miles, so a strong and deep stroke with our paddles, in half an hour revealed the wigwams, which stood upon some high ground divested of trees, at the termina-

tion of a narrow bay. But for thin lines of circling smoke I should have thought the place deserted, for neither canoe upon the beach, or other insignia, showed signs of human occupation.

My companion proposed a shot to warn them of our coming. Acquiescing in his suggestion, I raised the muzzle of my gun to the heavens and pulled the trigger, and scarcely had the report died away in the distance before a dozen persons of every age and sex, with twice the number of dogs, appeared almost as rapidly as Roderick Dhu's soldiers from their unpretending dwellings, and laughing, hooting, and scrambling, rushed to the landing-place to greet the strangers, who by this time had got into sufficiently shallow water to render it necessary to disembark from the canoe, that her frail bottom might not suffer from coming in contact with the pebbly beach. Welcome, most welcome were we made by these primitive people ; but I must record to their shame, that the Indian dogs were far from favourably impressed with the appearance of my quadrupeds, and that moreover they did not hesitate to show it. But the hands of their masters were no way backward in repressing such inhospitable conduct, sticks and stones were abundant and close ; in a moment females and males had each seized a weapon, and the numerous howls and limping

dogs disappearing over the brow, told that skill with such missiles was part of the education of the Indian. A short examination of the goodly assembly disclosed that the majority were women and children, the young and mature men being away hunting; but this circumstance did not appear in the least to prevent our becoming the recipients of their hospitality.

Foremost among those who presented themselves to shake hands with me, were Saucy and Fatty-plumpy. Never previously had I seen either look so well; their dark skins glistened with the bloom of health, and their mischievous eyes twinkled with merriment as if they recalled the memory of something unusually droll. Perhaps my countenance indicated the same, for every time our eyes met there was a speaking glance, a downward look, and a subdued titter. However, the two sisters did not consider that they were alone intended for ornament, for my baggage was divided between them, and each with a fair man's load on her back, walked by my side towards the wigwams with as much ease and grace as a Regent-street beauty would with nought but her parasol to encumber her.

A point of etiquette now occurred which required finesse so as to hurt no one's feelings, viz., whose

domicile should I occupy. As a white hunter, the chief's by right, in which case I should be eternally under the gaze of these mischievous girls, and who possibly might revert to their matrimonial stratagems, so I proposed, as neither the chief nor his sons were at home, to quarter myself on a querulous, blear-eyed sexigenarian, with a limp in one leg, and a most diabolical cast of countenance. But this would not be listened to; in fact, I doubt much if the old man had the power to receive me after what was said, and I was pushed and hauled into the wigwam of the parents of the two dark-skinned beauties; the wife, and I suppose the mother of Fatty-plumpy, stating in high falsetto all the time, "That as all their mans had gone hunt, plenty room for me." I should not like to take away the good lady's character, and then I might be mistaken, for her English was far from perfect, and my knowledge of her tongue limited, but as they had no male guardian at home, inclination as well as right made her appropriate the first man that Providence threw in her way.

However, the air was too warm and the flies too numerous to enjoy any comfort within their birch-bark residence, so I seized the first available opportunity to escape into the fresh air, and when I imagined myself free from observation, picked up

my gun, and whistling for Poteen and Skye, stole off into the woods. Whether it be that this situation from proximity to the lake is less sheltered than the vicinity of my own shanty, the cover was not nearly so dense, and the deciduous trees appear less numerous. Pushing directly from the water, I kept ascending till I gained an elevation over the lake of six or seven hundred feet. This plateau was entirely free from large timber, although clothed with a close growth of witch-elm, sumach, and several varieties of creepers.

From the altitude of the position a pleasant breeze was perceptible, and the nuisances of the lowlands, the flies and mosquitoes, were absent. The view from here was magnificent. At my feet reposed the lake calm as glass, while the shadows on its bosom reflected the surrounding high ground and trees with as much distinctness as if they were reality. Numerous islands of irregular shapes and various sizes, all covered with heavy coniferous timber, added much to the picturesqueness of the scene, while the hazy green distance of outline, occasionally broken by a monarch of the forest more stalwart than his fellows, formed a most fitting and charming picture. To the left could trace for many a mile the tortuous course of the river which we had descended in the morning,

green as an emerald where the pools occurred, but white as snow along the surface of the turbulent rapids.

No need here for distance to lend enchantment to the scene. All was enchantment, fairyland; but only fancy the contrast between it at this season and in the depths of winter; could anything be imagined greater?—I very much doubt it. Skirting this ridge the dogs flushed a brace of Canadian or spruce partridges, which with their usual indifference to the presence of man, lit on the branch of a patriarchal birch-tree within twenty yards of my position.

Inquisitiveness, as with women, seems to be their besetting weakness, and as often brings the former to a premature death, as the latter into trouble. The wing of a wonderfully killing trout fly is made from this bird's rich dark chestnut feathers, so I felt few qualms of conscience in killing both.

They were in most perfect feather, and would have done grace to an ornithologist's case of stuffed birds. In appearance they very much resemble the red grouse of our Scotch hills, so much so in fact, that all but an expert would confuse the two together, for even the scarlet iris around the eye is not wanting.

The extreme tameness of the spruce partridge, more properly spruce grouse, is easily accounted for.

Inhabiting as they do these immense northern forests, they seldom or never see members of the human family, and thus are ignorant of his bloodthirsty instincts. The fox, the mink, and the eagle-owl, they are familiar with, and possess as much subtlety in avoiding their proximity as many birds that are supposed to be far more wary.

I have often advocated their introduction into the North of England and South of Scotland, but I fear my endeavours have not been crowned with success, for I have never learned of a trial being made, still I stick to my idea, and believe the man of means would be well rewarded, even supposing he spent hundreds of pounds to be successful in the project.

Winding down the side of the slope sheltered from the northern breezes, I found wherever the ground was sufficiently open, the greatest abundance of wild strawberries, not large like those that are highly cultivated, or even of medium size, as such that have gone wild in an old bed from neglect, but the tiny little mountain berry so delicious in flavour. Their profusion was something remarkable, for in the space of a couple of yards, diminutive as they were, sufficient might have been collected to have satisfied the appetite of a growing schoolboy, and that is not saying

a little. In the vicinity of Pembina I had previously seen strawberries growing in great luxuriance, but not numerically to compare with the profusion of those now around me. Of course, such an opportunity was not to be let pass, so I lay down at length and fed till satiated.

I was not alone in my feast, for numerous peabiddy-birds (white-throated sparrow) and hermit thrushes seemed to be as partial to this delicately flavoured fruit as myself, and so careless did they appear to be of my presence that they darted down among the green vine-like leaves, or hovered over an intended alighting place, frequently within a few paces of my couch. This was rather surprising, for the hermit thrush is of such a solitary nature, than even in glades and forests where he is known to be abundant it is no easy matter to get sight of this exquisite songster—exquisite I say, for there are few birds that possess such a charming flute-like note, which it often prolongs in the warm nights of early summer up to even the wee small hours.

A month ago, those trees which cast their leaves in fall were as bare as telegraph poles, now they are covered with as dense a foliage as the most luxuriant of exotics. The rapidity with which vegetable life advances after the snows have become melted, and the

chill frosts of night are followed by days of heat, has often been commented upon, but those who have not seen it would never realise it from description. The increase is so rapid, that the difference that occurs in twenty-four hours is perfectly observable. In the short space of a single night, and in little more than a week, some species, particularly the sugar maple, from being absolutely naked will be clothed in a dense and lovely foliage. In my stroll I came across one of my special favourites, for I know few trees more picturesque, viz., a black-birch almost eighty feet in height, and clothed about its stem with the most ragged coating of slate-coloured moss and dishevelled bark, so as to impart the idea to the observer that its age must almost be coeval with that of the world. I never look at one of these hoary giants, but the figure of old Father Winter, or Santa Claus, as represented for the special edification of Christmas-keeping holiday-makers, is vividly recalled to my mind. So inflammable is this extraneous substance attached to it on all sides, that a spark will almost ignite it, when it will burn with a fierceness and rapidity truly alarming, forming a pillar of fire from ground to summit of impetuous, leaping flames, devouring with hungry fury all that will support their existence.

This tree, however, must not be confounded with the white-birch, no less graceful in its form and drooping tendrils, or with the paper-birch, so much sought after by the Indian, for from it not only are their canoes made, but table utensils and ornaments.

On returning towards the wigwams of my hosts, I saw two canoes racing up the bay, doubtless the hunters returning, who having noticed an unknown craft on the beach, are hurrying on, anxious to find what stranger the Manitoo has brought to their camp.

The aged Indian is not a man to say much, still I doubt if his feelings of kindness and hospitality are less strong than those possessed by the empty-headed, but fulsome votary of fashion. I know if I had to choose whose word I should place the greatest faith in, my choice would not be flattering to those of my own colour.

In civilised life I would have been expected to leave the wigwam and meet my future hosts on their way from the beach. In associating with Indians, anything like an attempt to curry favour with them is to be deprecated. Thus I sat down in the chief's lodge, lit my pipe, and relapsed in a moody and thoughtful silence. Presently the owner entered, fixing his keen eyes upon me, grunted what was intended for a

welcome, squatted upon his hams, and busied himself filling his pipe. Then ensued a long silence.

"The white man is sick?" inquired my host.

"No, but he is sad," I responded, continuing, "The brother of my tribe, that came to your woods with me, is lost or dead; have your young men killed him?"

Laying down his pipe, leaning towards me and steadfastly gazing in my face, with more of earnestness and less of vehemence in his manner, he said: "The children of my tribe kill now only cariboo and moose. Your brother is alive, but in a new hunting-ground away six days' journey, where the pale-face squaw dwells. I know no more."

I did not suppose that Antoine had been killed, but I thought it was necessary for our mutual safety to show an anxiety for the welfare of my companion, for they were doubtless aware that I had not communicated with or heard from him since his departure now nearly six weeks ago.

After a long pause in which I said nothing, and in which the eyes of the Red-man were firmly fixed on me, he said, "You are welcome."

Then I handed him my pipe, which he took, returning the compliment by giving me his. Each then smoked, the silence only being broken by the

females entering with their lord's gun and traps, over the stowing away of which they spend an unnecessary length of time, doubtless their curiosity fabricating this flimsy means of excuse for prolonging their stay with hopes of gratifying their curiosity on the subject of our conversation. Thus the *entente cordiale* was thoroughly established, and although little was spoken the greatest good feeling prevailed.

CHAPTER XV.

THIS old chief was as fine a specimen of the Indian as I ever met; although not over ordinary height, he was graceful, and remarkably symmetrically formed. In age, I should imagine, close on sixty, still upright in carriage as a wand. He also possessed a most searching eye, and one that never for an instant quailed under the look of the person he conversed with. This is unusual with the Red-man; seldom can he look you straight in the face, and too frequently his manner before white men implies inferiority.

From my host I learned that his had been once a powerful tribe, but from small-pox (the scourge of all the aboriginal population) getting introduced among them, their numbers had become decimated, till only thirty-four members remained. "It was the fire-water brought among us by the voyageur that

offended the great Manitoo," he exclaimed. This doubtless had been told him by the Roman Catholic or Wesleyan missionaries, who have done zealous and earnest work in neighbouring localities. And the means being justified by the result, no one will blame these earnest good men for making use of such a subterfuge.

To the Indian, whisky implies ruin, starvation, and death, therefore any means, I say, are justifiable to prevent their using it. Is not this craving for ardent spirits among a race who until within the last century knew of no liquid stronger than water, extraordinary; every feeling seems to give way under its influence, and the most fearful example of its baneful results has no more power to detain them from indulging in it to excess, than if they were entirely destitute of the power of restraint.

The principal purport of my visit was soon explained, viz., obtaining one of the young men to accompany me on my proposed tramp to the barren grounds. The old chief in a regretful tone of voice said, that but for his age he would go with me himself, but "He now too old, too muchee old," and then silently sat and thought.

In the mean time supper was brought in by his squaw and the younger women, who remained to

participate in the feast—a stewed porcupine, and no mean delicacy I can vouch for, when properly cooked. At length *quantum sufficit*, and the host and I ceased together, and both drew a sigh of relief, not a bad indication that we had had enough. After a yawn and a stretch, and a long but finally successful effort to light his pipe, the chief commenced :

“ I have been thinking, as I cannot go, and you want Indians to accompany you ”—here the squaw, her step-daughter, and daughter ceased eating, and fixed their eyes intently upon the head of the family —“ that you had better take my brother’s son,” continued the chief ;” but he got no further, for here Saucy exclaimed, “ I go !” Fatty-plumpy called out, “ Me go !” and the old harridan, the female head of the house, in whom up to the present moment I had seen some points worthy of admiration, in shrill, high falsetto voice, backed up the proposition of both the girls.

I am certain if any one could have seen me under the ordeal, they would have said that I looked sternly grand upon this occasion. If I did not, I felt so; but my stateliness availed nothing in the womens eyes, for there ensued from their tongues a wrangle of high words, entirely conducted in Indian; but ignorant as I was of that language, I could frequently detect the mention of my name.

Stately as the monarch on his throne I sat, patiently waiting for the chief to reprove such unseemly conduct; but relief did not come—taciturn he continued to remain. What conclusion but one could I under such circumstances come to, that the poor old fellow was hen-pecked; hen-pecked as severely as any city man by aristocratic wife, as any good-looking idle ne'er do anything for himself by the partner of his joys and sorrows, who has several thousands laid out at interest, and considerable expectation looming in futurity. To escape civilisation, match-making mothers, would-be married daughters, I had betaken myself to a life of solitude, and after all to find that the female bosom, though clothed in deer-skin, was actuated by the same impulses as those habited in silks and laces—was it not disappointing—fearfully disappointing?

From the head of the family I could not get another word that night, no, not a syllable; but what the chief wanted in powers of speech, was amply made up by his better-half—his superior half, I should have said. Not the least amusing, well, annoying portion of the matter was, that I, the by far most interested person, was not permitted an opportunity to get in a word, either in the way of objection or dissent, edge-wise or otherwise; evidently it was considered that I had been put up at auction, bid for, knocked down,

and sold. One consolation I nevertheless noted, there was a split in the camp, and disunion often leads to destruction, thought I, chuckling, mind you internally, for both the young ladies had the argument to themselves, which was conducted in the angriest tones, when the old squaw spoke, and after much earnestness, and a considerable amount of patience, pacified the belligerents.

All this time the old chief was dumb; the only evidence that he evinced of life was the puff, puff, puff of his fondly-loved pipe. And your humble servant followed suit, rivalling in his efforts the grandeur of the old Sachem. However, the aged Indian was not long left to himself, his wife, acting as spokesman for the daughters, harangued him, and he answered in the affirmative by a grunt. Then the old lady addressed her broken English to me. Courtesy forbade me not to listen; the purport of what she said was that her two daughters desired to appropriate me; that Saucy was without a rival in paddling a canoe or making camp; and Fatty-plumpy for packing home game, or making moccasins, was beyond all compeers, and that they both wished to become my squaws. At this speech, which I have much abbreviated, the old chief grunted a "humph" of assent, and the young women in question looked

unutterable things at me, and defiantly at each other.

At length I felt ready for sleep, so I rolled myself in my blanket and laid down; however, the drowsy god forsook me after being in the land of dreams for an hour or two. The heat felt oppressive, and the mosquitoes hovered over me in clouds, when I awoke; but I was not half refreshed, so craved for more repose. Giving a stretch, I rolled over on the other side, but came in contact with a reclining figure. Well, why not sleep with my face turned one way as well as another, thought I, so I tried to revert to my original position, but my outstretched arms came in contact with another human form. By degrees I was fully awake. I remembered the country I was in, and how in it customs prevailed widely different from those in the land of my birth; and that the danger in these unknown forests, and among its inhabitants, were universally greater than could be encountered at home. So these noble confiding people, the chief and the sharer of his state, knowing this, had taken up their sleeping place on either side of me, the better to preserve your humble servant from all dangers while a guest in their humble dwelling.

Very considerate, doubtless, I thought this, far more than your most devoted host would do for you

in England. (Oh how selfish society over there has become of late years; a man's value now-a-days is reckoned by the length of his purse. Any snob can marry a pretty woman if the balance at his banker's will furnish her with an indefinite amount of gewgaws, &c., floated through my brain in the course of the subsequent half-hour.) However, it was time again to go to sleep, and doubtless I would have done so, but for those bloodthirsty pests, the mosquitoes, who kept singing and biting, biting and singing till I could stand it no longer.

For a moment, nervously, I fumbled in my pockets for my match-box; everything in rotation came to hand but what I wanted; at length I clasped the object of my search, and I looked forward with transport to blowing such a cloud as would make every one of these winged pests as sick as a bride of her marriage tour, such a one as prefers to be able to say that she spent her honeymoon abroad, so gets a taste of a thorough south-western gale crossing the Channel. By the sense of touch I loaded my pipe, then sat up and sharply drew the match over the rough edge of the box, there was a splutter, a blaze, and afterwards a doubtful moment whether the lucifer would burn up or not; the hesitation decided the matter in my favour, and as I sucked into the bowl of my pipe the ruddy blaze I cast my eyes thoughtfully upon the recumbent

figures on either side, for I had no desire to wake elderly people, knowing how important it is that they should have an uninterrupted night's rest. But is it possible, that on my left is no wrinkled face, that on the right no shrivelled-up arm.

In my astonishment I nearly swallowed pipe, stem and all; and might have shoved the match down my throat, for I extinguished it, and throwing myself back with a groan, stoically permitted the mosquitoes to drink, if they thought proper, my heart's blood. But all my fortitude could not school me long to treat these winged pests with indifference, so in anguish of spirit I groaned, and restlessly and unwillingly kept changing my position.

At length a gentle voice asked me if I was ill. I answered not, when another repeated the same query. In an instant I pulled my blanket over my head and commenced to snore vociferously, as if I had never known any other state than somnolence. The result of this last stratagem was different from what I anticipated, for doubtless impressed with the belief that I wished to impart to them, simultaneously each of my flankers came closer to me; the move might have been prompted by the philanthropic desire to leave less room for the mosquitoes to practice their leech-like proclivities upon me. I, however, in time slept, not soundly; for I dreamed a dream, which,

when I thought over in the morning, reminded me of what I had read of the temptations good St. Anthony had been submitted to.

To say that I rose up refreshed would be stating an untruth; my mind was *distract*, my body demoralised, but the old cure served me good purpose. Don't imagine I am going to sound the praises of brandy and soda-water, for I don't believe in them, and if I did, they were not obtainable here; but a plunge into the clear pellucid lake.

During a stroll, afterwards, I found I had an appetite, so returned to the wigwam, having tried very hard, and almost satisfactorily, to conclude that the experiences of last night never occurred, but were the result of a highly-wrought imagination caused by a disordered stomach. My reception on joining the breakfast was cordial in the extreme; nothing transpired to mar the harmony of the entertainment, so the clouds of future disagreeables which I had fabricated, floated away like mist before the sun.

With the old chief as companion, after having fed till nature demanded no more, we sauntered out to smoke our morning pipe. My dogs were as usual at my heels, for now that I was among strangers, they never permitted me to be out of their sight for a moment. Indians are seldom, almost never loquacious,

and this interview did not belie their character. Possibly we had been together a quarter of an hour, perhaps more, when a remarkably well-bred looking fox-hound came towards us. From the way he carried his head, I knew that he either was deaf, or suffered severely from canker in one of his ears. At this apparition I was surprised, immensely surprised, although I doubt if I could have been knocked down with a feather. Was such to be wondered at, for here was an animal that would have done credit, aye, possibly led the van in the best-bred pack in England? In height the hound was about twenty-six inches at the shoulder, and his deep chest and strong couplings spoke of unusual strength and power. When approaching us, my dogs met him half-way, and if I dare judge from his manner, he recalled from their appearance memories of a long past life. No growl was on his lip, or churlishness denoted by his open honest face as the strangers advanced and welcomed him. Again and again, as if uncertain that this interview were possible, he inspected Skye and Poteen, and as often would stretch himself, scratching up the grass with his hind legs, and place his deep-flewed muzzle in the air and cause the woods to echo with his deep mellow voice.

At length the old hound came towards me. I held down my hand to caress him, but he withdrew his head and sniffed around it for some minutes ; then he raised himself on his hind limbs, placed his paws upon my shoulder, and looking heavenward, gave expression to his feelings by many a deep and long-drawn note of pleasure.

"That dog know you?" said the old chief.

"No, but he knows my race," responded I ; "but where does he come from?" I inquired.

And the old Indian told me ; it was a long story, but I will do my best to narrate it correctly.

"Years ago there came here a white man. He was a great chief in his own country the voyageurs told me. With him were two dogs, that is one ; for two years he lived among us, and each day he spent in fishing and hunting ; day after day he went to the woods or water, and never returned without game. At length a bear killed one of his dogs and he was sad. Months afterwards passed on till summer came, when he bid us good-bye, and started across the lake, for he said he was going to the east, to the land of his fathers. In summer, when the waters are low, the most skilful Indian can with difficulty travel that route ; for the sharp jagged rocks are so close and near the surface that none but those who know the rapids

intimately can pass through them in safety. I feared for this white man; I even proposed to go with him myself, or send one of the young men of the tribe, but his answer ever was, 'I go alone.' The day he departed his canoe was out of sight before noon, and with its disappearance we ceased to think of him, not to forget him. Four days after his master had left, this dog returned to our camp, not where it is now, but away across that bay, and the poor creature was half-starved from want of food, and almost devoured by the flies. A dog will not leave his master while he lives, therefore I saw evil in this, so that night determined to find out if I had just grounds for my forebodings. They were too true; we found the canoe with a hole in its side and bottom upwards against the rocks, near at hand the dead and disfigured body of our late visitor. On that point (pointing northward), under a hemlock, where the cariboo pass every spring and fall, he is buried."

A few days afterwards one of the tribe found his gun. "I will fetch it for you to look at;" and for a few moments I was left alone; no, not alone, for my four-footed companions were with me, and the old hound, who looked steadfastly in my face, and to every word of petting or commendation I uttered bow-wowed a deep and solemn response.

The chief was not long absent; on his return he placed in my hand a modern double-gun, and although it showed evidence of wear and neglect, the excellence of its workmanship could not be disputed. I glanced along the rib that separated the barrels at the breech; rust had as yet done little to obliterate the name of one of the most fashionable West-end makers of twenty-five years ago.

But who was his stranger? would it ever be known? Whether or not, of one thing I felt certain, that he was a man of good birth and fair means, or how would he have possessed a pair of hounds that the Beaufort pack might have been proud of, a gun from the hands of a maker that Royalty would have patronised?

Looking across intently at that distant point I could distinguish a hemlock, faintly it is true, still my eye is too conversant with the foliage of trees to make a mistake; and beneath its sombre plumage rests one for whom many a fair acre and an ancestral hall possibly was intended as an heritage. Does no mother pine for the wanderer's return? or has watching and hope deferred laid her in an early grave? I look down and the old hound's eye catches mine, and again he sounds a deep and sad note, truly a fitting requiem to my thoughts. Skye and Poteen, jealous

by nature to an extreme, took no dislike to their fellow-countryman, and the old creature would not leave me for a moment ; his attachment was painful, for his blear eyes remained ever fixed on me, as if to lose me from his sight was to lose all that bound him to life, could instinct have told him to the land of his birth.

Later on in the day I found the chief's nephew ; he was an active, clean-built youth of three or four-and-twenty. To him I stated in as concise a manner as possible my future movements, and my desire for his companionship. Like all Indians, till there was a grand pow-wow over the subject, he would promise nothing, so another day was lost. On the morrow, however, I became impatient, and vowed I should go with Sugar as my sole companion, if he had not made up his mind by sunrise next morning. That night his services were tendered and accepted ; and I was more than satisfied, for I believed I had obtained a guide in whom I could repose every confidence, and who would stand to me through every danger as long as he possessed life.

The ways of the Chinese are pronounced to be strange by a popular modern writer ; the same conclusion I have long come to about the Indians, so commenced to believe that the lively interest taken

in me by the daughters of the heads of the establishment was only an indication of the value the chief placed upon the friendship of the white stranger, and their choice of resting-place immediately in my vicinity on the last night, instead of reposing as far as possible from who might have been the gayest of Lotharios, caused me scarcely more than a momentary thought. Moreover, it takes two to make love, and as I had not evinced the slightest disposition for even flirtation, I felt that really there were no grounds for alarm. However, I had reckoned wrongly, as the sequel will show.

About sunrise I was on the beach ready for departure. The baggage, much augmented in quantity, lay ready for shipment, but my canoe had disappeared. Wondering what could have become of it, I was awoke from my reverie by a much larger craft being carried out of the brush and launched, and before I could interfere, the luggage was quickly placed on board, each of the young squaws, paddle in hand, taking a position in it. In a moment I saw a deep trap had been laid for me, and that it would require some finesse and much decision of character not to fall into it.

Drawing myself up I inquired what had become of my canoe. A Babel of tongues answered that it

was too small. To this statement I politely but firmly differed; but the clamour of half a dozen voices drowned my words. Order and silence being restored, I counted on my fingers to the old chief the number of my party, and appealed to his judgment for support. Doubtless he would have done so, but the high falsetto voice of his wife drowned the old man's words ere they got utterance; "And him, and him," the harridan exclaimed over and over again, pointing to the two girls, who each time echoed her words with, "And me, and me," pointing at the same time with the forefinger of their right hand towards their charming selves.

This could not be. I had no food, no accommodation for such an increase to my party, and therefore I must decline the pleasure of their company. But the old squaw, old woman like, again put in her oar, and addressing herself to me, said, "But him your squaw, and him your squaw," pointing out the young ladies in succession, and continued this chant for several minutes, her gestures and voice becoming momentarily louder.

At length I could stand it no longer, so insisted that my canoe should be produced. After this there was a pause, and I really commenced to fear that I was trapped, when the old chief recovered his self-

possession, ultimately ordering two of the outside spectators, who I must say all along appeared immensely tickled at the whole proceeding, to fetch my canoe from the brush where it had doubtless been secreted by orders of my would-be mother-in-law, and my would-be wives. To pick out from among the baggage in the larger craft what belonged to me was only the work of a few moments; in a second or two afterwards we were all afloat and some yards intervening between the shore, when a thought struck me that it would be better to endeavour to say a few parting words that would pacify my late hospitable friends. So I addressed them and stated that my refusal of the honour that had been offered me, was not from a depreciation of the beauty and attractiveness of the good old chief's daughters, very far from it, for Saucy rivalled the fawn in grace and Fatty-plumpy the swan in rounded contour of form, that how happy could any man be with either, and supremely blessed with both, but to accept so much happiness required consideration, which I would give it during my absence. This excuse evidently was not considered in a favourable light, for both mother and daughters turned upon the old chief, whose raised voice now indicated that he had already borne as much as human nature could or would submit to. As the light

buoyant craft swiftly glided from the shore, I heard a long deep howl; it was the poor old hound whom the Indians were dragging from the water, which he had entered obviously with the intention of swimming after me.

Once clear of the headlands, as the breeze was fair, a blanket was set to officiate as sail, and we bowled along right merrily over the sparkling waters while I paid out a heavily shotted spoon-bait with the hope of catching some of the great lake trout which abound in all these inland waters. After being over an hour unsuccessful as we skirted the sombre sides of a heavily timbered island, I had a run and soon after landed a fish of near twenty pounds weight.

From its size I might have expected a fierce and protracted struggle, but these lake dwellers possess none of the game qualities of the inhabitants of the rivers and brooks; they are very dark in colour with large heads, and although no doubt for an instant can arise that they do not belong to the *Salmonidæ* family, still they are not possessed of the graceful lines and contour of the other representatives of the race.

While near land, although the water had every appearance of great depth, my spoon-bait was scarcely

overboard a few minutes before I hooked a fish, and as none got away and the hook was deeply fastened in the gullet of each capture, I am inclined to believe that they are most greedy feeders.

In my younger days I lived for some time on the banks of Lough Neagh, in the North of Ireland; frequently I have seen the fishermen there take in their draught-nets a large lake trout which they called doli-chan and buddoch; the resemblance between these fish and those of this distant lake in north-west territory was very striking. Those in Ireland go up the rivers in autumn to spawn, whether their American congeners have the same habit I was unable to learn.

Carrying sail upon a canoe is so dangerous, except when its management be entirely trusted to Indians, that I would advise no white man to attempt it, unless he be brought up in the backwoods, and accustomed to the management of these crafts from his infancy, for the very slightest mistake will turn them over. At first when the blanket was set I acknowledge to having felt nervous, but soon that feeling was dispelled, for any one at a glance could see that my new attendant was most skilful in handling his tottleish bark.

Skirting for miles a low weedy shore, just such a

place as the angler at home would expect to find pike, we doubled a rocky headland, and disembarked at the mouth of a clear pebbly-bottomed stream which entered the lake in a glorious rapid. Time was precious, as we were anxious to tramp ten miles before dark, or nothing would have pleased me better than to have tried how the thousands of trout rising on every side would take the artificial fly.

Secreting our canoe in a dark thicket of dwarf cedar, shouldering our respective packs and starting in Indian file over an undefined trail, took few more minutes than required to narrate it, and before we had gone over a quarter of a mile, we had entered as dark and gloomy a piece of woodland I ever remember to have traversed.

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CHAPTER XVI.

MY new attendant I called Cariboo (not because that was his name, but had some resemblance to it), for the Indian languages have a peculiar guttural intonation in nearly every syllable, that even if you remember a word it is next to impossible to pronounce it correctly.

Our line of march was in the following order. Cariboo in front, succeeded by Sugar, myself bringing up the rear. The heaviest load was carried by the leader. About fifty pounds it must have weighed, not including my spare gun and some loose ammunition. My own pack was about thirty-five pounds, while Sugar's was somewhat less.

From the spongy nature of the soil our progress at first was very slow, not even a mile an hour, but as we commenced to ascend to more elevated ground,

the trees and brush becoming less dense and the footing better, the pace considerably increased.

I can carry a gun from night till morning and feel very trifling fatigue result; but the moment I mount a pack, all energy and strength seem to desert me. I believe most thoroughly that Cariboo would have no more difficulty in carrying a hundred-weight than I would my present load. The Indians are really extraordinary fellows at such a task, and the rapidity that they get over the ground when performing it, always providing the walking is good, cannot fail to evoke the admiration of all observers.

From cedar and hemlock swamp we got into forests of deciduous timber, here and there mixed with pine; hare-runs were numerous in every direction, and the dogs kept incessantly flushing spruce-grouse. If it had not been for the flies, which were very troublesome, and the severe tax upon our strength imposed by our loads, this walk would have been most enjoyable after we left the lowlands; but long before I reached our halting-place I felt thoroughly knocked up, pride, and the injury that might ensue from setting so bad an example, alone preventing me from giving in.

At length—and I don't think I ever uttered "thank God" with more fervency for anything—we came to a small opening, with numerous lodge-poles stand-

ing in it. Here Cariboo stopped, and without the slightest evidence of impatience or desire for release, quietly deposited his load. I fear I did not follow the example set me with the same patience and method; but, oh! thanks for the relief I got when released from its pressure.

A prettier spot for a hunter's camp would be difficult to find. From a brook about twenty yards wide, bounding over a rock and gravel bottom, rose an abrupt slope, the summit of which was flat and covered with the closest carpeting of moss and grass. In front, and on either flank, stretched a fine forest of deciduous and coniferous timber now in all the glory of summer foliage.

My companions, after an absence of a few minutes, returned with loads of birch-bark, so blackened with smoke that they had evidently done duty frequently before, and with them soon constructed a capital wigwam. The frying-pan was shortly after brought into play, so that ere darkness set in, there was every prospect of passing a most comfortable night.

The morning broke bright and clear, not a cloud upon the sky, not a fleece of mist upon the earth, and far-off ridges, with their fringe of glorious pines, stood forth in clearness of outline, so that the stranger only accustomed to other climes, would have

imagined them half the distance from us that they were. And the perfect silence that reigned around was not even broken by the sough of the wind.

"Beautiful ! charming ! lovely !" I exclaimed. Confound those flies though ; in my absence of mind the pests had taken advantage of me, and ruthlessly awoke me from my reverie.

The heavy tramp through the swamp, and the climb up the steep ascent yesterday, had made me more than desirous for a dip in the murmuring brook at our feet ; but how to accomplish it I knew not, for to defend my face and hands, let alone my whole body, from mosquitoes and black-flies, was a task I was certain most imperfectly to perform ; but I felt dirty, clammy, and craved for the invigorating pleasure of lolling at length in one of the shallow rapids. The more I considered the risk, the less could I restrain my hankering, so I resolved to chance it. To undress and tumble into the water was not difficult, *sed revocare gradus*, that was the hitch, for wet or only partially dry drawers, or even trousers, are apt to have a will of their own and resist being rapidly jumped into. Therefore I summoned Sugar and directed him to cut a cedar branch with which to thrash the scoundrels off while I got into the first coating of my apparel.

“Are you ready, boy?” I exclaimed, when I saw him standing on the bank with the bough in his hand.

“Yes, Capen,” he exclaimed, and I made one rush for him.

Vigorously he applied the whisk; with celerity I struggled to get into my unmentionables, and as ever found the old adage verified, “the greater haste, the worse speed,” when the lad ceased suddenly in his efforts, for the little vixen Skye, supposing no doubt he was beating me, seized him by the hand. In an instant I turned round; the dog was about to renew the contest with total disregard for my voice, so I made a rush at him, and ludicrous to listen to, very painful to go through, I got a fearful cropper, for know, oh reader, that I had only succeeded in getting one leg home in my lower garment. To pick myself up, rush to my clothes and get into them, was only the work of a few minutes; but I deserved to be pitied, a hundred black-flies, and as many more mosquitoes, were already devouring me with all the assiduity of creatures who never before had known what it was to have a good square meal.

Fortunately, the lad was not much injured by the dog's teeth; still prevention is better than cure, so I made him suck the wound till I could obtain my stick of caustic (a thing that no one should knock

about the bush without), when I cauterised the wound, and further explained so satisfactorily the cause of the dog's assault, that both the biter and the bitten were in ten minutes as good friends as ever.

Our tramp next day was very pleasant, rolling high grounds covered with birch being the preponderating feature. By noon we had made such good progress that we considered we had earned a halt of a couple of hours. While taking a stroll around to look for spruce-grouse, I came across a noble specimen of the great horned-owl. This bird must not be confused with the eagle, Canadian, or horned-owl, for it is a much larger, more powerful, and a far handsomer plumaged bird; in fact it is to American *Strigidæ* what the eagle is to *Falconidæ*. It also does not appear to suffer from the effects of daylight, for when flushed it took wing with as much confidence as any diurnal bird, alighting afterwards upon a distant tree without the slightest awkwardness. To find them among hardwood timber during the day, I believe to be rare; for heretofore I have only seen them in the densest cover of spruce and hemlock; but on mentioning the subject to Cariboo, he informed me that in these sequestered districts the birch openings appeared to be their favourite resort.

Before starting Sugar joined us with what the

Americans would call "a fine mess of trout." He had captured them all with a piece of red cloth tied over the shank of his hook, his rod and tackle being a sapling and a piece of cord. I do not think I ever saw fish with more resplendent colours, their backs being of the deepest marbled green, flanks like burnished copper, gradually running into straw-colour along the stomach, while their sides were covered with the most brilliant of vermilion and ochre spots.

By a couple of hours before sunset I should deem that we had made near upon twenty miles, so a halt was called in order that due time could be allowed for getting the camp in order before night set in. During the latter portion of the day cariboo tracks existed in every direction, but not one was to be seen. My elder associate noticed me observing them, and said :

"By-and-bye, two three day, you find plenty."

Our encampment this evening was no less to be admired than that of last night, for behind us rose some rather elevated and precipitous ridges clothed to their summit with magnificent pines, while beneath lay a lake, not over a mile in length, with a solitary wooded island in its centre. In Scotland it would have been called a tarn ; with this word I somehow

associate supernatural beings, and few places I have ever seen were more likely to conjure up ideas in the mind of the believer in the mystic world than this lonely sheet of water.

Little of the sun's rays ever glinted off its bosom, for the land rose high around its placid surface, and the giant evergreens towered their heads towards heaven from the most elevated crests. An hour after the sun had disappeared a thread-sized crescent moon showed itself in the clear firmament above the feathery tree tops, and as the mosquitoes were less abundant, probably from the elevation of our position, I took my evening pipe out-doors. Oh, what a wonderful stillness reigned around; even the toad and green-headed frog had grown ashamed of disturbing the solitude, and the Canadian owl had desisted from uttering its maniac laugh.

Home and friends, companions in arms, some of whom had long gone to their resting-place, arose in vision before me. Crimean life, Indian plains, and Chinese joss-houses, passed before the retina of my brain, as if all composed one gigantic panorama. Then London with its innumerable gaslights, its busy thoroughfares, and brilliantly lit places of amusement, occupied my thoughts. My pipe had long gone out; feeling chilly from the night air, I

was about to make a move for my rug and camp-fire, when a yell as sudden as it was diabolical, rose, was re-echoed, and died away. My blood for a moment ran chill; but before I had further time for action, the same notes arose from another point; and my dogs, who were crouching at my feet, rose as if by mutual arrangement, so simultaneous was their action, and elevating their heads, howled most dismally. Well I knew what produced such doleful notes, still never do I hear them without a shudder. The strong-minded reader will say how childish; if he has experienced this wild yell in a suitable situation, I would submit to his opinion without cavil; but as I deem such to be improbable, I confess my weakness, for after all it was only the voice of the lucifée or bay lynx.

For three days we passed onwards, our path where possible being by compass due north, and one day was but a *résumé* of the other; our tramp from breaking up camp in the morning to pitching at night, seldom exceeding twelve or thirteen miles.

As Cariboo asserted, we saw his namesakes on the third afternoon; there were more than a dozen together, all more or less immersed in water on the margin of a flat-shored lake.

I did not see them till pointed out, and as fresh

meat was desirable, after tying up the dogs with instruction to release them if I waved my gun over my head, I resolved to make a stalk.

At starting I thought my undertaking easy enough, but soon found I had calculated without my host; for I discovered, when within three hundred yards of the quarry, that if I persisted in my approach from where I was, that I must cross a bare piece of smooth stony ground, almost a hundred yards in diameter.

So I drew back and made a detour, bettering myself, if possible, as regards winds, and recommenced an advance. Still it was not all easy sailing, for I was obliged to crawl along a dry crack little larger than a furrow that was laced and interlaced with the most affectionate briers I ever remember to have come in contact with. Though not the "wait-a-bits" of South Africa, they certainly would do no discredit to that distant part of the world. However, patience and a determination not to hurry, enabled me to overcome their embraces without losing temper. Inequalities in the ground, if trifling, are not observable from a distance; thus quite ignorant of the fortune in store for me I found that I could approach within fifty yards of the cariboo without more inconvenience than bending my shoulders. At length I

reached the brow that intervened between me and the game; something, I could not imagine that it was my approach, had alarmed them, and they were hastily leaving the water.

The nearest animal to me was a fine well-fed doe. On her flank I took aim; with the report she staggered, spun round and fell; in a moment after recovered her feet, and with hollow back, raised head, and protruding tongue, endeavoured to follow her comrades, who, by this time, were scouring away in the distance. I raised my gun and waved it for Poteen to be released; the movement disclosed to the wounded deer my position, which caused her to renew her efforts to escape, and so successful were they that I deemed it better to give her another shot. The thud that reached my ears told that the bullet had not been fruitlessly expended; and from the aim I had taken I believed that the ball had lodged within a few inches of its predecessor, still no indication was evinced by the stricken creature of its having any effect. But Poteen passes me with a rush, nor stops to inquire what is expected of him, but with the sagacity of his colley blood he sees and comprehends the whole affair, and is in a few moments baying the unfortunate cariboo. Having loaded I was approaching to deliver the *coup-de-grace*, when Skye, going

at his most rapid pace, which, at the best of times, was of no great shakes, rushed by me, to assist his comrade. Bullied in front and rear, having to spring round first to face one aggressor then another, did its work, and the death-stricken creature fell to the earth exhausted.

The fresh meat was most acceptable, and a jolly feed of tit-bits ensued, the gormandising being kept up by the Indians far on into the wee small hours. The amount of animal food Indians can eat, and where they manage to stow it, is really surprising. Even that atom of a Red-man, Sugar, consumed more than half a dozen Yorkshire ploughman could eat for a wager. The result was as might be expected, our start on the morrow was not effected till late, and our progress during the remainder of the day was slow and laboured.

That evening our camp was neither picturesque nor comfortable, the only thing that could recommend the position being the vicinity of an excellent spring of water. The flies, however, were exceedingly troublesome, and the dogs unusually restless.

About an hour before dawn we had a perfect serenade of wolves, bass-voiced, powerful-lunged fellows, who from their propinquity appeared inclined to object to our invasion of their demesne.

"Plenty cariboo to-morrow," said Cariboo.

"Why?" I inquired.

"Because wolf plenty; no cariboo, no wolf," he answered.

Such was the case, for plenty of deer were seen, some still with their antlers in the moss, others with its dishevelled shreds hanging to them like pieces of scant black ribbon. Not requiring meat I did not attempt a stalk, but feel convinced I could have successfully done so if desirous. Several wolves were seen during the day, and at such distances to have probably afforded successful shots, but carrying a load on one's back sadly demoralises the shooter. So I let these bloodthirsty scoundrels go their way, trusting that we might meet on a future day when I had ceased to be a beast of burden.

So exposed was our camp that evening that not even the hum of a mosquito was heard, and the heat of the camp-fire was most acceptable. Consequently I enjoyed the best night's rest I had had for weeks. To all appearances we have reached the highest elevation southward of the great river, which, judging from what the Indians say, and the computed distance we have travelled, cannot be over sixty or seventy miles off. Nothing but dwarf timber and tangled brush cover these barriers; but attractive

as they are now, I can imagine them literally a howling wilderness in winter. The first ptarmigan we have come across I killed to-day; they were so numerous that I bagged seven in an hour, and although tempted to continue the slaughter by the most provokingly enticing shots, I desisted.

Cariboo were also still plentiful, several herds being seen in the course of our morning march. During our mid-day halt our guide killed a very large wolf—not an old effete scoundrel, but in the fullest vigour of life, and his hide, which of course so early in the season had not obtained the long growth of hair ultimately destined to cover it, was almost chestnut, and as soft as the pelt of a beaver. On inquiring the particulars of how he had got within sufficient distance to knock his quarry over, he informed me that he had found a dead fawn, only killed a few hours. Knowing that the slayers were not far distant he left the vicinity, but when out of sight made a stalk back to the place up wind, and thus got a shot.

Made an excellent march this afternoon, and long before sundown came to a long-used but most charming camping ground on the margin of quite a large river. White men have been here lately, for I found a broken clay pipe lying among the wood ashes, the

edges of the fracture which split the bowl being so fresh, that the accident to it appeared to have happened only a few hours. Showing it to Sugar, he immediately exclaimed, "Voyageur!" and so possibly it was, going to some distant trading ground of the Hudson Bay Company.

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CHAPTER XVII.

WE had scarcely got things in order for the night, and every prospect existed that we should enjoy uninterrupted rest, than there was a tremendous row among the dogs. Cariboo rushed off through the darkness in the direction of the contest, followed by Sugar. Phlegmatically I smoked on, for well I knew that, whatever they had got hold of, they were able to master, or ere this I should have heard them sing out, so contented myself and gulped down my impatience till my escort returned and made a report. Phew! my goodness! confound it! Such a smell once felt is never forgotten—no need the Indians telling me what they have got a hold of. I certainly said, "Confound the skunk," or possibly used a stronger expression, for the whole atmosphere was redolent with the fetid stench; and when I commenced to think of Skye covered with the beastly

secretion, cuddling up to my side if the night got cold, oh, horrible! the thought almost made me ill in imagination.

Presently Indians and dogs returned. To say whether my two or four-footed friends smelt the strongest, would be a difficult matter. This I will say, that the dogs apparently had the most sensitive stomachs, for each got sick, and the Indians did not.

For many an hour after this episode, I lay and tossed about. Oh, how I wooed Somnus, but he would not be propitiated, although I smoked, smoked, smoked, till I felt convinced forty-eight hours' supply of tobacco had been consumed in a tenth of that time, and the roof of my mouth and upper portion of my tongue were parched as dry as a board, and imparted a flavour to my palate anything but aromatic. What was I to do? I had brought half a gallon of spirits with me, only to be used for medicinal purposes. I maturely considered the symptoms. I was an invalid, and no person in their proper senses could doubt it. So I quietly reached for my pack. Of course, I did not wish to be so selfish as to disturb others, and I took what a friend of mine would call a corker; I did not lay awake long after that dose of medicine. The next morning the camp remained so

redolent of skunk that I ate skunk, I drank skunk, and I breathed skunk. That fearful fetid, overpowering smell, and the repulsiveness of its odour, how can I describe it? This mishap was likely to interfere sadly with the pleasure of my future movements, for well I knew that it would take weeks to get rid of it, especially from the coats of the dogs, whom I was compelled for their safety ever to have in our encampment.

I cannot understand the perversity of members of the canine race. No amount of whipping will prevent them chasing and worrying the porcupine when opportunity offers; the same with the skunk, although they invariably become deadly sick for some hours afterwards. I acknowledge that the latter animal's cool effrontery is fearfully provoking, and I should imagine trying to the temper of a high couraged dog, for they have the most wonderful amount of assurance, walking into camp, or even wigwam, as if the place belonged to them, confident that they have but to open their battery to cause all to flee who are in the vicinity. As far as I am concerned they judge correctly, for I would sooner leave them my dinner, I believe even my pipe and tobacco-pouch, and that is saying a good deal, than for an instant dispute with them their right to possession. All the wild

animals treat them with the greatest courtesy, or else the creatures would be far more wary in their ways, for so indifferent to danger do they trot about the vicinity of their den, that if it were not so, it would require but a short time to extirpate the race.

Although I had determined to remain in this neighbourhood for some days, it did not prevent our commencing a flitting at an early hour to another site recommended by Cariboo, about half a mile down the river. The day, which had a close sultry feeling, promised rain, for the heavens were overcast with the darkest rolling clouds, while the wind soughed among the trees that skirted the river banks. It was a sad day, one of those that affect and depress the spirits, causing forebodings of evil constantly to arise. Our new halting-place was upon a peninsula, almost an island, projecting into a bend of the river, densely wooded on all sides, the centre for about the space of half an acre being perfectly bare, and so devoid of stumps that doubtless many years had passed since the axe had cleared it, for this clearing was evidently artificial. This conclusion I come to from pine being the preponderating growth of timber left, and pine stumps at the least calculation take a quarter of a century to decay. To this picturesque, retired opening in the

primeval forest, quite a history was attached, for Cariboo informed me that here for years, so many years back that the eldest of his tribe ceased to remember, came the missionaries to tell the Red-man what was good and bad medicine. I inquired from him what missionaries; evidently he misunderstood my question, but in response picked up a piece of birch-bark, and gazing fixedly upon it pretended to read, all the time declaiming with his hands. But this was not the information required; I wanted to explain to him the difference between the servant of the Church of Rome and Protestantism, and how to do it puzzled me completely. However, the Indian is wonderfully keen in his perception, and with a sudden bright radiation of countenance said, "Two missionary, one got squaw, one no have squaw, and do so," crossing himself in the most orthodox manner; "the last kind, him come here." This left no doubt on my mind that I stood upon one of those places that the Jesuits used to visit annually to preach the Gospel to the heathen at the time Canada was a possession of France. What an impressive sight it must have been, more than a hundred years ago, when this land supported a comparatively large Indian population, for it was before small-pox had made its decimating inroad among the Red-men, to have seen a venerable

father, so sincere in the faith he preached, as to travel thousands and thousands of miles to proclaim it to the heathen, holding forth to crowds of painted warlike savages, grouped in astonished, inquiring, picturesque crowds, under the dark shadows of the sombre coniferous trees. When our gallant troops under brave General Woolf were struggling hand to hand and foot to foot with their no less gallant foes on the plains of Abraham, when the noble Mountcalm and his chivalrous and successful antagonist were sighing out their life's blood within sight of the citadel of the New World, possibly as great a battle was being fought here, against the superstition and idolatry of the aborigines. The life of the missionary, whatever be his creed, is a hard one, and every honour is due to the sincere man who forsakes home, country, and relatives to perform the task to which he has devoted himself.

Before noon our camp was made, and the threatening state of the weather induced my attendants to pay more than ordinary attention to its construction. It was well they did so, for about two in the afternoon heavy drops of rain commenced to fall, rapidly increasing in number and violence. The breeze, which for some time had been hushed, in spasmodic gusts now swayed the tree-tops. Suddenly the heavens appeared to fall upon the earth, and down de-

scended the torrents and the wind tore over the landscape, as if from its previous imprisonment it had gained fresh fury. It was the white-squall of the ocean in its most violent form transferred to land. As I sought shelter from the raging elements, a flash of forked lightning lit up, then left in almost utter darkness the surrounding objects, followed by thunder so terrifically loud as almost to stun the listener. The sublime grandeur awed me; the Indians hid their heads and remained silent, while the dogs cowered away as if imbued with some all-powerful fear. At intervals of a few minutes again and again the thunder and lightning contended for mastery, each striving to outdo the other in violence, while the surface of the earth seethed with the impetuous downfall of rain as the surface of a boiling caldron.

Fortunately my waterproofs were at hand, for nothing in the shape of edifice but such composed of stone or bricks and mortar could keep out such a waterspout. But all things have an end, and storms, like tempers, last in proportion to their violence.

By six o'clock the clouds had broken and were drifting to leeward before a balmy breeze, and the whole earth emitted a fragrance, as if offering incense to the Creator for having prevented its destruction by the warring elements.

As soon as the rain had ceased I found my way to the edge of the river. By a deep rapid that rushed into a dark placid pool, I took a seat upon a ledge of rock. The discolouration of the water from the storm was trifling, and the fish, happy possibly in the anticipation of a glut of food being brought down from the upper tributaries of the stream, sprang from their liquid haunts in very wantonness of spirits.

The temptation I could stand no longer, so hastened for my rod. The time lost in putting it together I even regretted. At length it was ready for use, and the first cast hooked a fine fish. A second equally large was also landed; but the finest river trout that I have ever previously killed, weighing eleven or twelve pounds, was my third victim. When the sun dipped the horizon, I had such a load as I should be sorry to have been compelled to carry to a distant camp.

A strange peculiarity of the trout of these northern rivers is, that they cease to feed the moment twilight commences. Although possessing much experience of Scotch rivers I do not remember that such is the case; but I know that on the streams of Long Island and the South of Ireland, in the long calm nights of midsummer, I have taken fish in greater

quantities from sunset to break of day than in any other portion of the twenty-four hours. Many may disbelieve this statement; for the sake of proving the truth of what I state, let the fisherman in June find his way to the River Bride, in the county of Cork, let him commence work at Rathcormack about ten in the morning, and use throughout the day all the skill and knowledge he possesses, and I will pledge myself that he will kill a greater weight of fish in the first hour after sunset, than he does throughout the time the sun is above the horizon. Wanderer and sojourner in foreign lands as I have been, still can I not recall a more lovely river to fish than the rapid murmuring Bride of the Green Isle of the ocean.

The more severe the summer storm, the more invigorating the atmosphere appears after it has passed away; long and late I sat that night inhaling its fresh balminess. The woods were no longer silent, the depression that for a few nights previously overpowered all animal life was removed, and every rock, log, and tree seemed to find a voice.

Even the diminutive chain-mouse, that I had not heard since I sojourned on the banks of the distant Saskatchewan, claimed my attention, with its strange metallic note, so strange, indeed, that listening to it

induces wonder how aught in the shape of quadruped, and of so diminutive stature, can produce so unnatural a call.

Those that have been engaged in logging of a sharp frosty morning can remember the click that the ox-chain makes as the various links come together; the note of the chain-mouse is similar, but possessed of more reverberation although less body of sound. Oft on a still night when moose calling I have heard it; for many a day I wondered what it could be, till by chance I learned the origin of this quaintest of animal voices.

Whip-poor-will! who that has spent an evening in American forest-lands can forget this oft-repeated call. It truly has not the melody of the nightingale, still is soft and pleasant to the ear, although apt to be monotonous. To-night it sounded from the dark woods, evidence that this bird (one of the *Caprimulgidae* family), although denied a residence by many authorities so far north, does in summer migrate to higher latitudes than supposed.

But to bed, to bed, sleepy head, I feel tired and drowsy, so retire.

Sugar next day was left in camp to take charge of my worldly wealth, while Cariboo with my second gun proposed hunting eastward, I selecting the reverse direction. In my tramp I saw several

reindeer, but as they appeared wild I did not attempt to stalk them. A wolf gave me a fair but long shot—which I missed—my want of skill not by any means improving my temper. Working my way off the barren grounds towards the river, I got into a dense swamp of hemlock and cedar, the mossy carpeting of the ground through which these evergreens sprung being cut up with innumerable tracks of the changeable hare. Convinced that these beautiful animals abounded around me, still all exertions to obtain a shot failed, although I practised an artifice common among the Indians, and which I have often found successful, viz., walking straight in one direction, and indicating by manner that I am perfectly indifferent to surrounding objects, or that my attention is directed to something on one of the topmost boughs of a distant tree, then turning suddenly round and looking for such animals in your rear who may have imagined they are safe from the star-gazing idiot who has gone by.

But the hares here do not yet appear to be educated up to that standard that would make such trickery succeed.

At length I gained not the river bank, but a large extent of overflow caused by beavers. Within a radius of a couple of hundred square yards I counted eight of their dwellings; and although lately-gnawed

wood, and innumerable fresh tracks spoke distinctly of their still inhabiting this sequestered retreat, an hour's patient waiting did not reward me with a sight of the shy architects.

I could not help thinking what wrong impressions all are liable to imbibe from books and drawings, as I surveyed the residences of these once valuable rodents; for instead of their houses looking like the inverted bowl of a soup ladle—smooth on the surface and regular in form—they resemble more a very ragged but closely pressed-down brush-heap, here and there, particularly on the top, most unsystematically plastered with large clods of mould.

The beavers were paying visits, taking a siesta, or enjoying an early dinner-party, so I came forth from my hiding-place, feeling small—as every one does who attempts a bit of roguery in which he does not succeed; so slipping quietly off, for fear I should be noticed doing so, and jeered at in consequence, I directed my course towards the river. I had not gone above a yard or two when a blue jay proclaimed my presence in his usual ironical laughing call. I looked up, saw the scoundrel; he was surveying me in the ordinary impudent manner of his race; his eye caught mine, and he laughed again in irony. I try never to lose my temper, in fact, be-

lieve I have a pretty good control over it ; but would you believe me I could have shot that bird. I was very nearly turning back to do it, for ignorant of what a risk he had run, when my back was turned he derisively chattered after me, knowing doubtless full well that the joke was all on his side. Those blue jays are impudent, saucy scoundrels, and they presume on the knowledge that they are not worth a charge of shot ; in fact, like a pettifogging attorney who tries to induce you to kick him, but you desist, not considering that the momentary pleasure you enjoy in doing so is worth the costs for assault of which you would afterwards probably be mulcted.

Gaining the water's edge, I was charmed to see how beautifully the trout were rising. To me there is an attractiveness in following the course of a river when fish are on the feed, so instead of returning to our encampment by cutting across the barren, I resolved to follow the tortuous stream till I reached home.

Stranger, never be induced to adopt such a course ; take my word for it if you do so, you will have reason for regret. Three or four times in my life I have allowed myself to be induced to do so, and ere I had done so half an hour, have regretted my decision. To turn back no one likes, it too much

resembles being defeated in something you have pledged yourself to perform, so hoping that every turn, every bend will disclose fewer impediments, you push on.

But, alas! you hope in vain; for the same labyrinths of tangled brush and fallen trees exist, *ad infinitum*, and nine rivers out of ten, straight as they may appear at a cursory glance, are as crooked as ram's horns.

To have a couple of hours' fishing before sunset was doubtless the cause of my hurrying; how often one calculates without his host the sequel will show.

Soon after starting I regretted the step I had taken, for the banks of the stream were choked with snags, windfalls, and creepers; onwards I continued struggling in the hope of gaining easier walking, but my expectations were doomed to disappointment.

A person cannot straddle a log, part bushes, or carry a gun through such obstacles without exposing himself to the flies, and their name was million. Not only did they attack me on the face and hands, but the mosquitoes bit me through my sleeves and trousers, while the black-flies established a branch tunnel communication between my collar and my wristbands and ankles. No express-train system did they adopt, but made wayside stations every-

where, each furnished with a restaurant, my poor body being the ham sandwiches, hard-boiled eggs, or anything else they chose to imagine, on which to sup. Too late to turn back, I dreaded the advance, but procrastination was not to be thought of, so I pushed forward.

Such was my plight when I perceived a mink on a point of rock close by. The pelt was worth having, so I fired; but when I reached the place where it stood, the animal struggling in its death throes was nearing the rapids and far beyond my reach. Disappointed, I resumed my journey.

To enlarge upon my difficulties any further would be useless. All I have to say is that it was almost dark before I came in sight of our camp-fire, and that the cheery welcome that the dogs gave me when I approached it, did much to soften the bitterness of my wounded spirits, and, may I add, wounded body.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A CHAPTER of accidents, however, had occurred during my absence ; invariably such is the case when my back is turned.

Sugar's story I will first tell. About noon he heard Poteen barking on the edge of the river a couple of hundred yards above the camp. - Skye, true to his character, no sooner heard his companion's voice, than regardless of the boy, rushed off to join in whatever mischief was promised. The lad having every faith in the professions of friendship hourly exhibited by his bedfellow, whistled and called upon the truants to come back, till he was exhausted, but all in vain. Dreading my return, and probably a scolding for not keeping the dogs tied up, to bring them home he went up the river to where both now were fiercely giving tongue. Fortunately he took with him a club, for excepting his knife he had no other arms.

On gaining the spot he immediately learned from

the appearance and manner of the dogs that they had brought to bay in the top of a decayed tree some animal that they were desirous of getting at, but could not reach.

Examination soon discovered a wild-cat kitten about three months old. Indians are never at a loss for expedients, so he made a noose, tied it on the end of a pole, and getting above the creature, slipped it over its head while it was occupied in watching the tactics of its two angry assailants.

So far the game was well played--and triumphantly the lad was preparing to carry home his prize when he was attacked by the female parent in the most ferocious manner. So sudden was her onslaught, that until the assailant was at his feet she had not been seen; however, Poteen made a dash at her and gave her a sample of the pattern of his teeth, but that was all, for as soon as he discovered the foe was determined to fight, and had received some scratches, he retired, Skye in the mean time coming in for the brunt of the battle.

An Indian's courage rarely forsakes him in the most trying ordeal, so dropping the captive kitten he rushed for the relinquished club, and with it renewed the fight. This caused the wild-cat to leave Skye, who by this time was pretty nearly used up,

and devote her energies to the boy; several times the agile lad beat her off; but at length missing his blow, the fiend got inside his reach and fastened on his throat. With characteristic presence of mind Sugar threw himself down, when his sharp-edged knife finished the struggle.

The reader must not think that the North American wild-cat, lucifee, or bay lynx is a contemptible foe, far from it, for although its weight seldom exceeds two or three and twenty pounds, it is one of the most ferocious, active, and dangerous animals of the New World.

Sugar, fortunately, had not suffered as much as his clothes. I believe bringing home the kitten and his dead antagonist softened all pains of body that he felt; but Skye was much mauled, one of his eyes being closed, I fear permanently; even the craven-hearted Poteen had convincing evidence on one leg and along his cheek of how adroitly the foe could handle her teeth and claws. For his mishaps I felt little pity, for if with his superior strength and power of jaw he had assisted the game little terrier, the lad would have been spared, and Skye would have come off with far fewer injuries.

Now to Cariboo. He shot one of his namesakes and left it, intending to return for the hide and tit-bits on his homeward journey. After being absent three

or four hours, on approaching where he had left his game, he found an old she-bear with a couple of cubs in possession. Nothing daunted, he determined to dispute the right of property with mooin, on the ground of prior claims, so advanced under cover within twenty yards of the old lady, who was already busy rending the carcase in pieces.

The Indian being unaccustomed to the use of a double-gun, in some inexplicable manner discharged one barrel before he had taken aim. This *contretemps* disclosed the young Indian's ambush, and the old fiend immediately charged. In the hurry of my attendant to fire a second time he got his finger upon the wrong trigger, and of course with no result: at length just as his antagonist was about to spring on him, he pressed the proper one, and believes he wounded the foe; however, she did not fall, but in the excitement he made his escape and thought himself very fortunate in being spared to narrate his adventure.

This story was told so straightforwardly that I believed it in every detail, more especially as an Indian seldom, I may say never, exaggerates his own performances, and that a double gun is a *rara avis* among them, and only occasionally seen in the possession of a chief.

In spite of skunky smells, the dogs had daily their wounds well washed in salt and water, and

the sores smeared over with oil of tar to protect them from the insects, which resulted in all soon thoroughly recovering from their ailments. On account of the clearing that surrounds it, our camp here, fortunately, is not so much troubled with insect pests as it would otherwise be.

My heart was large that night; so assuming the duties of medico, I prescribed for each of my two-footed companions, as well as myself—for I had suffered many a break and wound in person as well as in spirits—a nightcap. I can vouch it went down the right way, and that their slumbers, judging from my own, were sounder in consequence.

Next morning Cariboo and I held a council of war on the expediency of visiting the scene of his disaster of yesterday; the result was that we started after breakfast in the hope of meeting Mrs. Bruin and her progeny.

My associate took up the trail of his former track, and at that long low pace peculiar to his race, without deviation to the right or left, kept it. An Indian when unloaded is a wonderfully rapid walker, and although they do not appear to be making any exertion, slip over the ground at an amazing gait, so fast, in truth, that it required, and then unsuccessfully, every effort of mine to keep up. However, when I wanted a

few minutes' breathing time, I invariably saw some mythical object in the distance that required consideration, and his opinion on what it was. Thus a halt was gained, possibly not very creditably, but none the less necessary, for it never does to show your weakness, as it might lead to liberties being taken, and the Red-man has a blind belief that he is in everything immensely inferior to the white, an impression that never should be allowed to alter.

In about an hour and a half we came to the scene of the contest. The cariboo was nearly all devoured, a circumstance that caused my companion to remark, "I no hit he, I think." The grass and even bushes around were broken down, and some of the bones had been dragged many yards from where the deer had fallen.

If alone I should have now been compelled to give up further pursuit; but the keen eyes of Cariboo soon discovered the trail, which, after he had followed a short distance, the lad, returning to my side, said, *sotto voce*, "He gone to water—I know—close by."

To the water I was led; it was a small pool, the stream that fed it and flowed from it not being over a few inches in diameter, and so sunk in the ground that the herbage completely hid its course.

But at this pool the bears had certainly drank, for

the herbage was trampled upon, and so lately had this occurred that some of the stems that had been crushed down were still in the act of regaining their upright position. Again, as to further proceedings, I should have been stumped, but the innate knowledge that the Indian possesses solved the mystery.

In rather a brush-grown portion of the barrens about a quarter of a mile distant, piled up to a considerable height, lay a number of large boulders. To these the Indian pointed: "Moo in go there to sleep, me think," and forward he stalked towards it. At last gaining its vicinity, we found it such a tangled mass of brush that a dozen instead of three bears might have hid within its closely interlocked masses of vegetation without fear of detection.

I thought better not to state my suspicion, but leave the affair in the hands of one who was immeasurably my superior in wood-craft. At length we wormed ourselves through the dwarf brush and gained silently the highest point of the rocks. The feat was not easy, still it was silently performed. Having gained this perch, earnestly I gazed into every nook and cranny, but failed to discover the objects of our search, so I sat down and would have commenced to smoke, but my attendant stopped me. To humour him more than from any idea that we should find the bears, I returned my tobacco appa-

tus to my pocket, and stretched myself to rest, for keeping up with the Indian had very much fatigued me.

A long half-hour I spent thus, when Cariboo nudged my shoulder, and whispered in my ear, "I see he."

"Where?" I asked.

"There, there; you look along my gun, there."

But blow me if I could.

"Well, you see he?"

"No! I can see nothing but stones and bushes; you must be mistaken."

"You see that sapling? well, look to the left you see white stone, and just beyond that close to root of sumach you see bear."

All this instruction was very lucid, but although I obeyed it to the letter, still my sight refused to gratify me.

"I never see the like afore, he there," again pointing his gun; "he sound asleep," said the lad.

So both of us put fresh cartridges in our guns, and when ready I desired Cariboo to shoot. Long and careful was the aim he took; I could hear the pulsation of my heart in my impatience for the report; at length it came and a roar of pain answered it. That something was hit, I could see from the struggle among

the bushes, and who or what it was we were not long kept in doubt, for the old bear with a cub showed herself for an instant, then she entered the cover from whence the sound of the stricken animal came. It was now obvious that one of the cubs had got the contents of the Indian's gun. Cariboo by this time had loaded the empty barrel, so I told him to watch for a chance and give the other youngster his quietus. Soon an opportunity occurred, and the cub fell dead. However, the report of the gun brought his dam to the front; her head was raised looking in our direction, but not at us, for she had not yet discovered our position. So I took sight and fired for her breast; the shot was not a good one, still it brought her to the ground; but recovering herself she regained her footing and charged upon three legs. As he by this time had reloaded, I retreated behind the Indian to gain time to shove a fresh cartridge into my gun. Ten, eight, six yards only severed us from the foe, and I was about to step to the front, when bang, bang went both my companion's barrels, and the old vixen was incapable of doing further mischief.

It was a good and most exciting forenoon's work, and I was more than pleased with my attendant's performance. The old bear was large but lean to an extreme; the cubs, however, were in prime con-

dition, and under the influence of their mother's tongue had cultivated most beautiful glossy coats.

We got back to camp soon after mid-day, and I went in for an afternoon's fishing, which I most thoroughly enjoyed, for the trout rose freely, and I was not pestered by small fish.

Next morning I crossed the river at the only place we could discover that appeared fordable. The current was so strong that several times I regretted having undertaken my task; however, once started it never would do to turn back, for both my attendants assured me it was impossible, and I had given a deaf ear to their remonstrances. Before entering the water, however, I had taken the precaution of securing a good stout pole of eight or nine feet in length; but for the assistance it rendered me, I should have failed; as it was I got wet to the shoulders, which did not add to my comfort during the tramp that followed.

Passenger pigeons I saw in great numbers throughout the forenoon; heretofore I was under the impression that they did not come so far north. From Audubon's or Wilson's work I doubtless imbibed this idea.

After pushing through some very dense cedar and hemlock swamp thickly interspersed with wind-

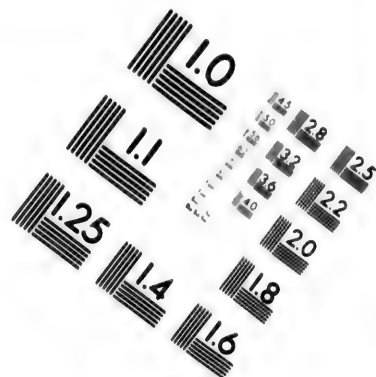
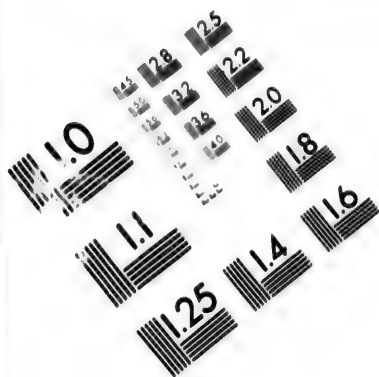
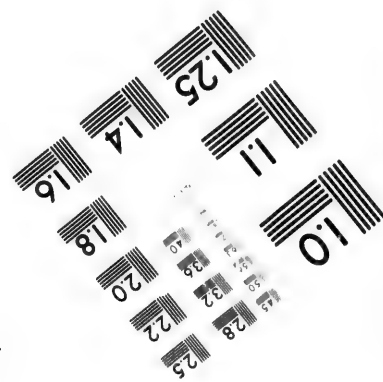
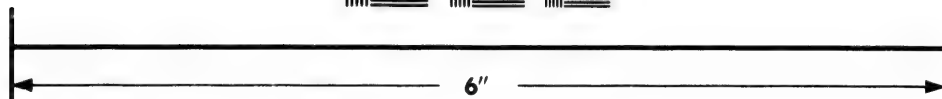
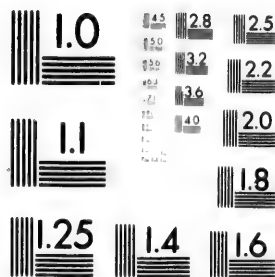


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falls, I gained a large meadow many hundred acres in extent, with a considerable sized pond in the centre.

The surface of the water was dotted over with a number of different varieties of wild-fowl, the preponderating species being the stately mallard and merganser. The margin of this diminutive lake was so swampy that all attempts to reach it failed. One effort I made nearly cost me dearly, for the crust of the surface which had been swaying up and down, almost rolling like miniature waves, broke under the pressure of my right foot, and but for an amount of activity scarcely to be expected from a person of my figure I would have gone in possibly—yes, and probably over my head. Snipe were here very abundant; doubtless this was a favourite hatching-place—for its solitude and nature exactly suited such a purpose. On a dead pine of great height, decayed and in many places barkless, sat a bald-headed eagle, solitary guardian of the demesne. Scarcely could he have chosen a more suitable throne, for from his perch he could see on all sides what was transpiring among the animal kingdom that formed his principal prey. This bird, emblem of the Great Western Republic, is no more a favourite of mine than of Benjamin Franklin,

for he is a robber, a coward, and a filthy feeder. Yet it cannot be denied that his appearance is noble and his flight majestic.

Although his appetite is so ravenous that scarcely anything comes amiss to his palate, he much prefers to kill his own food; and several times during my observation, with swift and powerful pinion he dashed with the velocity of an arrow on to the surface of the water to seize some thoughtless fish which was basking on the surface.

To kill marauders such as this some deem praiseworthy, but I found him far too wary to permit me within range, even had I desired to do so, which I did not, for they occupy a useful place in the animal creation.

After a detour of two or three miles I came upon a lovely little rivulet; beneath my feet where I struck it was a perpendicular fall of six or seven yards in height, and as I gazed into the rocky recesses of a pool beneath I saw an otter feeding on a trout he had just captured. I got a fair shot at the poacher, but although the distance was short and the animal severely wounded, he managed to struggle into the water.

Determined, however, to secure the hide, I ran down to a shallow ford below, which could not be

passed without the animal affording me a second shot. My supposition that he would make for this, so as to get down the course of the stream, was correct, for scarcely had I gained my stand before it appeared. Blood was flowing profusely from the creature's head and shoulders, still he looked as if he had plenty of vitality left to gain a hiding-place, so I gave him the second barrel. In length from nose to end of tail this trophy must have measured five feet, a size that is quite unusual; his coat was a beautiful dark chestnut brown, and although the fur was rather short, still was in excellent order. The vitality of the otter is quite remarkable; with the exception of the wild-cat I doubt if any animal in the American forests require more killing.

For a long time the Canadian otter was considered identical with the European species, but scientific men have now decided otherwise; for independent of variation in size and colour, they are discovered to possess osteological differences. On the Pacific coast of North America there is another recognised distinct species to be found.

On my route campward I came across a piece of open stony land entirely without trees or brush; it was covered with the most delicious little wild strawberries, the only objection being that they were so

small that a person could eat much more rapidly than gather them.

Got home in good time and found that Cariboo, in my absence, had packed the bear-skins home. He is invaluable on such an excursion, for he is not only an expert hunter, but willing and obliging, and perfectly unassuming.

In the course of conversation in the evening he informed me that there was a bare bluff, some distance down this side of the river, where a white man had been buried. So I started at early day to find it.

The weather was not promising, for the clouds were low, and the wind in its feeling spoke of rain. Although making the landscape look sombre, still good resulted in two ways; the heat ceased to be oppressive and the flies troublesome, so right briskly I trudged along, passing in my way the rocky hillock where the bears had been killed the day before. Two families of ptarmigan I disturbed; the young of one brood were able to fly a considerable distance. From their size I should imagine that they must have been quite two months old—rather an early hatching for this neighbourhood.

A couple of miles before I reached my destination I felt convinced that I could distinguish the object of my search, for a mound like a cairn of stones was con-

spicuous on the summit of a knoll which slanted at an angle of forty-five degrees towards the river. After half an hour's further trudge I found my surmises were correct. Stones of all portable sizes and of every possible shape had been thrown together, forming a heap eight or nine feet in height; by its side laid a rude cross, chiselled out of a slab of stone, brought up doubtless from the river bed. I should have liked to replace this emblem of our faith in its original position, but all my efforts to move it were abortive. Where the upright stem was crossed by the horizontal arms some letters were apparent, but all I could decipher were the capitals.

Is it surprising when I say that I sat here for more than an hour, and conjured up all sorts of visions in respect to its origin?

First, I thought it might possibly be a soldier's grave; and the muffled note of the drum, the Dead March in Saul, and firing parties, with all the impressive ceremonies of such a funeral floated before me; but more mature consideration told me that civilisation had not got sufficiently advanced in this lone land to make that possible. Then I saw, in thought, one who, to preach the Gospel to the heathen, had expatriated himself from all he held dear, borne up the steep hill brow to be placed in his last,

long resting-place by loving and devoted followers, far, so far from the land of his nativity. Or, again, it occurred to me that this out-of-the-way grave might be occupied by some hardy, energetic servant of the all-powerful Hudson Bay Company, who had succumbed under the privation inseparable from their exposed life; but the cross—why the cross? From it I was pleased to think that here reposed the mortal remains of one of its servants.

CHAPTER XIX.

CLOSER and closer to earth came the clouds ; a drop or two of rain called me from the realms of fancy, and hurriedly I started homewards. My step had not the energy of the morning, my spirits had lost their buoyancy ; and, unmindful of scenery, I trudged slowly homewards. What a burlesque was the place I was going to on the name. With each mile the rain increased, and the distant surroundings became less distinct, while from behind and to the eastward, a thick mist seemed bent on overtaking me. Soon it succeeded, and although not possessed of that amount of impenetrability peculiar to fogs in London or on the banks of Newfoundland, still it closed the horizon of my vision so effectually that all beyond a hundred yards was an unknown world, and with the fog the rain descended faster, not the large reckless drops of

the thunderstorm, but minute particles so numerous that they speedily penetrated through the thickest parts of my clothing. Onward I tramped, confident in my power to regain camp; one, two, three hours passed, and at length it commenced to dawn upon me that I was lost. Till the darkness of night commenced to settle over the gloomy landscape I struggled hard not to admit the fact. Unwilling as I was to acknowledge that my skill in woodcraft was so deficient as to place me in such a position, yet much as I disliked it I could no longer disguise from myself the fact that I was lost.

If I had been in the timber-lands such a *contretemps* would not have been so serious, for soon I could have built a shelter and made a resting-place of birch or hemlock boughs; but out on the barrens, with scarcely a bush upon it larger than a dwarf ornamental shrub, it was a serious affair.

Knowing full well that I must now remain absent from the camp all night, I made a virtue of necessity out of my position, so sought and soon found a rock of sufficient elevation to shelter me from the drift.

Constant exertion for half an hour rewarded me with a few good armfuls of rotten but wet sticks, out of which to make a fire, but long and tedious were my efforts to coax them to burn. Through the

assistance of my gun I obtained sparks which I nursed into sickly blazes, again and again to go out when applied to the damp wood. But each short-lived flame had not been without benefit, for their repeated application had dried the lower portions of the boughs, till an ultimate effort succeeded in forming the nucleus of a fire.

Before this amount of success had rewarded my efforts, I feared to leave the place I had selected to remain in, lest I should be unable to refind it. Now I had it for a beacon, so I became confident, and wandered off in each direction till I had collected an ample supply of sticks to keep up a good fire through the long hours of night, for independent of it affording warmth, the society of a ruddy blaze almost makes up for the want of companions.

Argue as I would with myself that thousands were more uncomfortable, that I was rather to be envied than otherwise, I could not close my eyes, and the wolves, wild-cats, and Canadian owls seemed to contend with each other which could produce the most weird-like sounds.

Just before break of day this concert reopened, for it had flagged a little after midnight, and the exertions of each contestant seemed to be redoubled.

Never did storm-tossed mariner wish for land, never

did patient crave for the night to pass, more than I longed for break of day. At length a perceptible light on the eastern horizon, which rose gradually and slowly towards the zenith as I gazed upon it, informed me that my longing was about to be gratified. And if I had wanted no other indication of the dawn, I might have known it was at hand, for the nocturnal animals had one by one ceased to grieve that the hours of darkness were over.

With the rise of the sun the fog disappeared, and the rain ceased. Little observation of the surrounding objects disclosed my position. I was within three hundred yards of where the bears had been shot, thus accounting for the unusual gathering of flesh-feeders, who had doubtless been attracted to the locality by the carrion.

Hurriedly I pushed for camp, not to surprise its inmates asleep, as I expected, but to find both sitting up after having passed a most anxious night. My appearance startled them; in a moment they sprung to their feet and rushed to my side. Sugar took my hand and kissed it without saying a word. At this I was not surprised, for he had been long with me, and before entering my service he had never known kindness; but when a few moments afterwards Cariboo, looking sheepish and awkward, did the same, I felt

I was not without true friends, far, far as I was from civilisation.

My absence, I learned, had caused both great alarm, and that instead of cowering over the camp-fire, or enjoying the shelter that our temporary resting-place afforded, they had been looking for me in every direction imagination told them I might have taken. How fatiguing and earnest had been their search, their haggard features and exhausted expression confirmed.

Treat an Indian kindly, make allowance for his defalcations, reprove him when he does wrong, but do so more in sorrow than anger, and if he is not a drunkard, or under the influence of ardent spirits, a more faithful, loving servitor, the world cannot produce. A white man who practices bear and forbear, they learn almost to idolise, for their predisposition is to look up to him as a superior being.

I have not the slightest doubt that these primitive children of nature would have at any moment risked their lives to save mine ; whether I was struggling in the surging abyss of the swiftest rapid, or in the embrace of the fiercest bear ; therefore, is it a wonder that wherever the missionary has gained a hearing among them his influence has become dominant, unless the sordid gain-loving trader encroached upon his flock, and demoralised them with the soul-

debasement staple of their trade, ardent spirits, and with it altering the trusting, confiding aborigines into veritable fiends?

Although the sun was now high in the heavens, I craved for rest, so as soon as breakfast was discussed I turned in, giving permission to Sugar to accompany his companion wherever they chose to go, I promising to take care of camp in their absence.

Never did I sleep more soundly, but my rest was troubled with a thousand strange dreams, so that when I awoke I was as unrefreshed as when I lay down.

My head throbbed, my pulse rapidly beat, my skin felt hot, and a sensation of unaccountable languor had taken possession of my limbs.

Convinced that I was going to be ill, I yet struggled against it with all the determination I could command. Even the dogs, who had sufficiently recovered to be permitted to run at large, seemed to be aware that something was wrong and to regard me with more than ordinary affection, exchanging their inclinations to roam about for a desire to sit by my side.

At length evening came, and with it returned the lads. I welcomed them in the cheeriest manner I could, or at least made an effort to do so; but their keen eyes soon told them that I was unwell.

Thoroughly prostrated I retired to my couch, and two weeks passed before I was able to sit up or recognise my faithful watchers. That period is a dream to me, but how trying must it have been to my attendants.

July 12th. — About noon my unconsciousness passed away, and my mind's wanderings assumed a rational form. Cariboo entered the shed of boughs in which I reposed; it had been rethatched and strengthened, the better to shelter me. As he gazed upon my face, every lineament of his features denoting the most serious alarm, I spoke. "Thanks, Cariboo," were the words I said. In a moment he knelt by my side, and with a woman's softness took both my hands in his. No tear suffused his eye; but without it he looked the perfect ideal of gratitude. After a pause he raised his voice, and Sugar joined him in an instant.

The lad's features when I addressed him beamed with joy; silently he came close to me. Exerting my strength I patted him on the cheek, and the poor child clasped my hand and burst into a perfect torrent of tears.

Struggling to recover himself, with an effort he regained sufficient composure to speak.

"Capen, I thought you on the way to meet the Great Manitoo. Suppose he have taken you, I no

wish to stay behind ; because I too bad to go, he leave you with me a little time more."

Until I became convalescent the attention of these two untutored sons of the forest was perfectly touching. They never for a moment left me alone, and their instincts seemed to teach them to anticipate my slightest wish. I had but to move my hand, when, whichever was near would be at my side ; nor did night, that period of rest, seem one iota to lessen their vigilance. Generally each day Cariboo went to hunt ; and instead of confining himself to large game or fur-bearing animals, a squirrel or two, a grouse, or some wild-duck, he also killed, as he knew my appetite, which had become most fastidious, preferred them. Moreover the meat tea, more properly soup from its thickness, never was permitted to get cold, or the supply run low, in fact, to this valuable stimulant I credit my rapid recovery of strength.

True, it was too strong to take large quantities of, but that did not prevent me applying to it frequently. And such beautiful trout, brought to the camp alive, were prepared for me with an attention and cleanliness that would have tempted the most fastidious palate.

The mode of cooking them by the lads is well

worth mention, for it is deserving of being followed in a civilised household. With the aid of a hunting knife and axe they had riven out a rather long shingle. On this the fish, having been split open down the back and the vertebræ removed, the whole carefully washed and all particles of blood removed, was pinned flat with small wooden pegs. It was then placed in front of a clear wood-ash fire, a piece of deer fat being attached over whichever happened to be the upper end, so that the grease might drip over the trout, and saturate it; less than ten minutes sufficed, if the fire was good, for the morceau to be thoroughly ready for consumption, and the flavour was perfect.

Another delicacy I enjoyed through the forethought of the lads, was large quantities of whortleberries, blueberries, and raspberries. At this season of the year the two former are found abundant on the edge of the swamps, the latter on the barrens. Half an hour each day was devoted to their collection, a little basket of birch bark lined with leaves, and filled with these wild fruit, invariably being found by me at my bedside if I slept longer than usual in the morning. And oh how refreshing they were to my parched mouth and throat! Lonely I doubtlessly felt, but still could not help thinking how much

better I was situated than I could possibly have expected under the circumstances. The flies, too, had disappeared, a blessing for which it would be impossible for me to be sufficiently grateful, as in my weak state I was powerless to resist them.

Of an afternoon before the atmosphere got chilly, I would take a seat outside the camp, for the breeze playing on my temples always freshened me up. The flights of wild-ducks passing up or down the stream, the noisy, garrulous kingfishers and blue jays, in this land so like each other, quarrelling and squabbling for no conceivable cause, and the woodpeckers' indefatigable tap, tap, tapping on hollow limb, or blithely running round the trunk, to take unawares any prey that thought by such a movement of finesse to escape, ever afforded me amusement, and caused time to flit by on rapid wing.

I had felt sufficiently strong one evening to reach the river. Some Canadian crows, more resembling the raven than our rook, caw! caw! caw! passed overhead, as they winged their way to their roosting place. In itself such a sight might be regarded as a trifle, still it had the effect of recalling a hundred sunny memories of distant home and happy days.

Cariboo returned that evening with no greater reward for a long day's work than a porcupine, a

most acceptable addition to the larder; but the lad was not satisfied, and blamed himself for not having reaped a better reward, for he had seen plenty of deer and two bears. To his want of success regarding the first, he attributed the blame to the wolves, whom, he said, "Were altogether getting too plenty, so keep chasing cariboo all day, and most part of the night." If this is the case it is an indication that the game is returning south.

Having much improved in health, I have resolved that if all goes well in the interim we shall leave here in two days, and when I state my determination, smiles and approval meet it from my followers. Although true that both my attendants have lately had an easy time, still while I was sick both seemed to labour under great depression of spirits, and they, with the superstition peculiar to their race, doubtless associate this place with that misfortune, so long to remove to new scenes.

Skye affords me many a laugh. At the root of a stump close by my favourite seat on the river side, a chipmunk or ground squirrel has its nest; for want of larger game the dog devotes itself to the capture of this pretty little creature; but for cunning and impudence he is more than matched. If driven into its hole, as soon as the pursuer retires it will

come forth, get on the top of a stump, and chatter to attract his attention, then comes a charge, resulting in Skye's being too late. This is repeated several times, and always with the same termination. At length the dog resorts to strategy, and gets behind the stump watching the hole, but no chipmunk comes forth, the little rogue knows too much for that. Tired with watching, my little four-footed friend returns to my side, in a few moments his tormentor is again out chattering at him derisively. Sunset promises a fine day on the morrow; if such occurs, we commence our journey southwards.

While packing up our various effects ready for an early start, Antoine's name happened to be mentioned, when Cariboo pricked up his ears and with much earnestness in his face, said, "Antoine bad white man, remember me tell you so, Cap." This was the second time I had received gratuitous information on this subject, and on each occasion from persons that could not have any possible advantage to gain by maligning him.

I cannot say that I had ever taken a great liking to this half-breed Frenchman, and I had frequently regarded him with eyes of suspicion, when he has narrated with chuckling satisfaction how he had cheated a family of Indians out of their fall or

summer hunt collection of furs, or how he had discovered where their cache or storehouse was secreted, and pillaged it when the proprietors' backs were turned. Of course a man who would do such dishonest things to one class would do so to another, although he would say if he thought I did not enter into his feelings in the affair, "Remember, Cap, they only Indian."

However, I was commencing to think, from his continued absence, that the confidence I had placed in him was about to be abused, and that I should never again see the stores I had supplied him or their value, although at the time they were exchanged from my guardianship to his, he took oaths by every saint in the calendar, used a whole spelling-book of "sacres" that nothing would make him break his word. Nevertheless, it is most unfair to condemn a man without a hearing, and accident or illness may have detained him at some distant hunting-post, possibly he even might be dead. Unfriendly Red-skins, too, might have crossed his path, swollen rivers washed him away, dead limbs fallen upon him in the deep recess of the forest, or that fearful gun of his, the most antiquated rattletrap piece of firearms I had almost ever seen, which he invariably fed with a double load, have blown his carcase

into the four points of the wind. No, I will suspend my judgment for another month ; and then, if I hear nothing, give him the benefit of the doubt that one of the above chapter of accidents has overtaken him.

Although I had so long been an invalid during our stay at our half-island encampment, I did not turn my back to it without feelings of regret. Every stump, every rock, every bush, every tree had become familiar, and was associated with some little episode or other : under the one a chipmunk, the pretty little tamia of America, had its storeroom ; under the next was an earth that looked much as if an otter occasionally resorted to its deep intricacies for rest or safety ; in the bunch of witch-hazel I had secreted myself to get a shot at teal on their way to and from their feeding-place, and it was the favourite shelter for a hermit thrush, who often continued his charming modulated song long after midnight ; and as to the summits of the taller trees, was there one of them on which I had not observed the charming cedar-bird, sole American representative of the European waxwing ? Yes, at this season of the year it was a charming resting-place for poet or painter, one that possessed so many attractions that verses must have flown in abundance from the brain of the former and the hand of the latter be induced to rival

nature in her beauteous shades and lights. It was all I say at this season, but what would it resemble in winter, when deep snows covered the earth, when ice loaded down the water, and the powerful frost-laden north wind screeched through the valley, and shook the giant timbers in its boisterous grasp—when all the landscape that surrounded it was a howling wilderness? Well, such was the change that would come over it in the space of a few short months.

“Well, my lads, are you ready; got everything, forgotten nothing?” were the words I addressed to my attendants as they stood by me ready for the start.

“Yes, Cap, everything.”

“Well, off you go.” And shouldering their packs, which were far from small, away they started, light in heart, and with that long] panther-like stride that steals them so rapidly over the ground. I lingered among the *débris*, scattered over the hemlock boughs, threw down the camp-poles, and took a last glance around to see that nothing had been forgotten, then turned slowly to follow the course of my attendants, little Skye trotting close to my heels; faithful little fellow, how different was he from Poteen, who, as was his custom, preferred the society of the Indians. The only way I could account for this evidence of

bad taste was that he was a half-bred brute, with more of the father's than the mother's instincts.

Our marches were not to be hurried, for we had plenty of time, and I was still far from sufficiently strong to endure much fatigue, still I carried a pack—it was certainly a small one—but for the sake of example I thought it better not to spare myself, although both lads strongly protested against my doing so and begged me hard to have its contents divided amongst them. That day's tramp it did feel heavy, and the strap with which it was supported across my shoulders, in whatever position I placed it, kept incessantly galling my collar-bones. Sheer determination alone enabled me to hold out; but when we came to our evening halt, not over eight miles from where had been our late home, I was completely done up. The boys had seen several cariboo during the day, and were several minutes within shot of a splendid buck, which by description was as large as a moose; of course, this was a stretch of imagination, but it doubtless was a very fine animal, as these timber reindeer, in contradistinction to those of the far north distant barrens, sometimes exceed five hundred pounds in weight.

Some fresh trout procured by Sugar, the remnants of a grouse, ptarmigan, and squirrel chowder re-

warmed, formed my supper, and so refreshed did I feel after my appetite was satisfied, that I felt convinced I should much more satisfactorily perform my tramp on the morrow.

The morning was fine but hazy, and as we were about to shoulder our loads the boy pointing through the mist whispered, "There, Cap, you see over that rock cariboo." In a moment after I discovered them; from their feeding as they walked forward, I felt convinced they were unaware of our proximity. Anxious to please the lad, and to give him an opportunity of exhibiting his skill, I offered him my gun, and told him to let me see if he was a good hunter. Taking the weapon from my hand in an instant he was out of sight; I believe his celerity of movement was induced for fear I should change my mind. Seizing Poteen by the ear to prevent his following the boy, and possibly marring his shot, the other Indian with myself availed ourselves of the shelter produced by the back of a boulder, the better to see the stalk and its result. A quarter of an hour might have elapsed when a puff of smoke caught my eye. Instantly following the direction it indicated, I perceived one of the deer ineffectually struggling to follow its comrades who were now fleeing across the barren in Indian file, at their customary sharp trot-

ting gait. "Why don't the brat put in the second barrel?" I began to wonder, when the cariboo gave evidence of falling, but before it had quite lost its limbs the boy overtook it, and his knife did the rest of the work. It was a clever stalk, a good shot, and the finale was thoroughly workman-like, and when I told the lad what I thought of his performance he looked an inch taller at least, and as proud as a peacock with two tails.

Having examined a great number of cariboo horns from different parts of the American continent, the formation of the antlers of those that I or my followers have killed are almost identical with such as have been brought from Labrador, loftier, thinner, wider spread, with the palmation more confined to the tops than such as I have seen from the island of Newfoundland — the brow antlers again being larger and more prominent than those of the last-mentioned.

The flies having entirely disappeared from the barren grounds, it is Cariboo's opinion that the reason more deer are seen on our homeward route, is because migration to the south has commenced, and that we have now come in contact with the advance guard. When conversing on the habits of this animal I find my Indian does not coincide in that most current

belief that the palmated antler was intended by the Creator for clearing away the snow to enable its owner to obtain food in winter; for he says, "I never see him do so but with his foot, and I know cariboo most as well as my own people." This is no exaggeration, the American aborigines uncontaminated by frequent intercourse with white men, know the habits of the wild animals as well as they do the features of the members of their tribe.

END OF VOL. I.

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